THE TECHNIQUE OF WATER-COLOUR PAINTING

L. RICHMOND, R.O.I. R.B.A.
J. LITTLEJOHNS, R.B.A.

Congradulations and Best Wishes
For Your Birthday
June 21st. 1926

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& Louise H. Collins.

THE TECHNIQUE OF WATER-COLOUR PAINTING

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THE ART OF PAINTING IN PASTEL

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BY

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INTRODUCTION

THE object of this book is clearly defined by its title. It is concerned solely with the problems of technique, i.e. the manipulation of the materials. The writers hope that by directing attention exclusively to the craft the reader may be enabled, eventually, to pursue the art unimpeded by many of those technical difficulties which often prove to be a source of perpetual embarrassment. The handling of water-colour is so much more exacting in its difficulties and extensive in its possibilities than any other branch of painting, that the writers have been prompted to confine themselves to the consideration of technical problems.

So far as we are aware no book of the kind has hitherto appeared in this country. Many excellent works on the art of water-colour painting have been written by distinguished artists, but most, if not all, describe only that method which the writer happened to use—a method which, though perfectly suited to the temperament and purposes of that particular artist, may or may not specially appeal to the reader, and could not conceivably appeal to all readers. Such a book tends always to convey the misleading impression that the particular method described is best for the reader because it was best for the writer, and is necessarily superior to all other methods.

Our intention, on the contrary, is to advance no personal opinion as to the relative artistic value of any method, but to deal with all the methods we have tried and leave the reader to adopt, or adapt, whatever makes the strongest appeal.

The field of inquiry is so vast that we do not pretend to make more than an approach to a complete survey. We can do little more than suggest a plan of investigation and indicate certain starting points for further research.

To the few who are content to follow thoughtlessly in another's footsteps this plan may be disappointing; but to the many eager students who are seeking the path of personal expression, we believe that the wider horizon, with its prospect of adventure and discovery, will prove to provide a healthier stimulus.

L. R.
J. L.

1925.

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THE TECHNIQUE OF WATER-COLOUR PAINTING

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

NEARLY all problems, particularly those of a complex nature, can be simplified by clear statement; in fact, the statement often suggests the solution. Let us set down, then, in so many words, first in general and then in detail, the problem of technique in water-colour painting.

Given the materials—colours, brushes, paper mediums, and accessories—how can we represent any combinations of form, tone, and colour, limited only by the nature of those materials. That is the general statement.

Now let us further define by division, take each material, describe its qualities, and state the individual problems.

COLOURS. Water-colours can be divided into two kinds, transparent and opaque. The distinction is imperfect because some pigments, classed as transparent, are less transparent, that is to say more opaque, than others. What are called transparent colours are those composed of pure pigment and a little gum to make them adhere to the surface of the paper. When spread over the paper by means of water the paper shows through, unless the colour is applied very strongly; the greater the proportion of water used the more transparent the colour because the larger the surface of the paper visible between and through the particles of pigment.

Transparent colours can be made more or less opaque by adding chinese white—a method which extends its possibilities in some directions and limits them in others.

What are generally called opaque colours are those composed of powdered pigment mixed with a medium which enables them to completely cover the surfaces, so that the same result can be obtained on a black as on a white paper. This powder, however, can be modified by the addition of water.

The problem of the colour, therefore, is to discover what each colour and each kind of colour can do, singly and in combination, under any given circumstance.

THE CHOICE OF COLOURS. In this matter the artist is in the hands of the manufacturers, and, fortunately, is exceedingly well served. There never were so many reliable and well ground colours as at the present time. Nor are the differences in quality among the standard well-known makes by any means as great as artists seem generally to believe. There is a tendency for artists to swear by what they are accustomed to use, with little knowledge of the products of other makers. For the beginner, and others who have not acquired any preferences based on prejudice, the best plan is to try each kind. He will find that certain manufacturers supply a few colours with unique attractions, and that the rest differ but little. All manufacturers of any standing state clearly in their catalogues the origin of each colour and its degree of permanence. One word of warning should be borne in mind. Some of the figitive colours are so alluring that it is hard to part with them after close acquaintance.

BRUSHES. Fine pictures can be painted with ill-prepared colours, but inferior brushes would severely handicap a technical genius. If a brush is not really good it is just bad and merits no consideration. Whatever the circumstances, there can be no economy in this direction. Only the best will do. The market is crowded with rubbish, made of hair which defies the best workmanship. A hundred of such is not worth one good brush.

A brush should be springy without being stiff, come to a point (that is if it is made so as to come to a point) without hesitation, and last long enough to make it far cheaper than any substitute. For ordinary use there is nothing to beat the finest red sable; for additional purposes, "washing out" for instance, brushes with stiffer hair are essential. The choice of shape is a matter of personal preference, but in the matter of size there is only one safe rule: never use a small brush if it is possible by practice to make a larger one do equally well, because there are so many occasions when speed is all-important. As individual brushes of the most expensive grade vary in quality, each should be tested before buying.

PAPERS. The nature of the surface to which the colour is applied is a highly important factor, deserving more attention than it generally receives. Most artists use habitually a very small number of varieties of the recognized makes and, by so limiting the scope of their work, tend to stultify their powers. There are, perhaps, greater opportunities for the extension of water-colour in this department than in any other. For this reason several illustrations bear directly on this branch of the subject.

THE PROBLEM

The characteristics of paper which concern the artist are : thickness, surface, absorbence, tone, colour, and permanence.

Thickness. The thinner the paper the more quickly it stretches and " cockles " under the influence of moisture. As it is impossible to paint on a wavy surface a method of painting has to be devised to obviate these occurrences, or the paper, however attractive in other respects, must be avoided. Paper of medium thickness can be made amenable to certain methods if strained, or pasted on to cardboard, but if more than a certain amount of water is absorbed it stretches again and becomes useless. Here, then, is one of the minor problems of water-colour painting : how, successfully, to apply colour to papers of any given thickness. There are so many thin papers with such delightful qualities of surface and delicacies of tone as to justify the adoption of special methods and the selection of special subjects rather than pass the papers by.

Surface. Almost any surface, from the smoothest to the coarsest, can be used with good effect, and each kind can be induced to display its special charm by the adoption of suitable subjects and methods. For instance, a smooth white paper will give the impression of white in the untouched parts when framed and hung on a wall, while a coarse paper, under the same circumstances, will look grey and mottled. A wash of the same colour, therefore, would appear darker on the coarse paper as if thousands of dots of colour, slightly darker than the wash, had been added. One does not need to be highly imaginative to know that a cloudless sky, which on a smooth paper would look opaque and dull, might, on a coarse paper, become radiant and atmospheric.

This is one of the many " starting points " indicating directions for investigations. Here the problem is to find how the surface can play the part for which it is specifically fitted.

Tone. Reliable papers are now procurable in a large variety of tones, and increase in popularity with the growing use of body colour. Excepting the paler shades, however, toned papers are seldom suited to painting in transparent colours alone. But when the palette is enhanced by chinese white, subjects and effects, which the most expert technician would otherwise hesitate to attempt, suddenly become simplified. A new field of possibilities is thus revealed. Brilliant contrasts and subtle distinctions can be rendered in a few washes as soon as the new powers are realized. To discover exactly what those powers are will necessitate a number of careful experiments which fall easily into two groups : (*a*) to know what will happen when any given transparent colour is applied to a paper of any given tone, (*b*) to know what will happen when chinese white is

added to the transparent colour. The first group is, by far, the more important.

Perhaps the whole position can best be explained by a general statement. When any transparent colour is applied to white paper the paper is darkened, and the stronger the wash the darker the paper becomes. But when the same colours (except black) are applied to a black paper. the paper is lightened, and the stronger the wash the lighter the colour, This statement, true as far as it goes, does not cover the whole ground because all the colours do not possess the same degree of transparency; indeed, a few of them are decidedly opaque.

The field of inquiry is so great that there is a danger of frittering away useful time in experiments that will never be applied to a painting. The student would be well advised, therefore, to select a number of papers, say, half a dozen, of distinctly varied tones, and by gradated washes of each colour on each paper get a general idea of what these new conditions mean.

The subject need not be pursued here as it will be dealt with in detail later.

THE CHOICE OF PAPERS. A complete list of satisfactory papers is, of course, out of the question, as new varieties, made for purposes other than painting, are often discoverable.

But a few remarks about a few standard and other makes will be of service to the beginner. The three best known hand-made papers are "Arnold's," "R.W.S.," and "Whatman's." There are two kinds of each, "hot-pressed" and "not-pressed." The "hot-pressed" has a hard smooth surface; the "not-pressed" is softer and has an uneven surface (usually described as a "grain"). Both papers are made in several thicknesses and the "not-pressed" in different "grains." Each make has its special characteristics, but as preferences for either seem to depend on personal taste, the only safe plan is to try all.

"Cartridge" is the name given to considerably less expensive machine-made paper. It is little used for serious painting because the cheaper kinds are liable to darken; but stout cartridge of the finest quality is more satisfactory, in some respects, than the thinner hand-made papers. A variety made with a surface like canvas has especial claims, fully explained in connection with Plates VIII, XIII, and XIV. A thick hand-made paper with this surface would be exceedingly valuable. Indeed, there is room for much extension in this direction. The interesting grains to be found on many modern wallpapers, for instance, if applied to satisfactory material, would supply a considerable and growing need.

Perhaps the most widely favoured of all tinted papers are those known

as 'David Cox.' Used by the expert, and with full knowledge of their special qualities, they display unique charms; but they will not stand rough or laboured treatment.

All the large firms of artists' colourmen supply specimen pieces large enough to make minor tests upon, and numbered so that they can be ordered by post.

MEDIUMS. For the ultra-purist, who scorns all adventitious aids, there is only one medium—water. On this as on all other controversial questions the writers express no opinions. Mediums are extensively and increasingly used, and consequently demand adequate consideration.

Mediums are used for two purposes: to ensure the maximum brilliance of the colour and to give greater control. For the former purpose some manufacturers supply a quite reliable medium which prevents dark rich colours from sinking into the paper and becoming dull. But if too much is used it produces an unpleasant shine. The latter purpose, that of added control, is effected by (1) preventing quick drying, (2) thickening the water so that it moves more slowly, and (3) keeping the colour on the surface of the paper. The first obviates many of the difficulties due to heat; the second enables more to be done in one painting, and the third permits "wiping out" to become a dominant feature. Several prepared mediums are sold by most artists' colourmen, but glycerine and paste (as will be explained later) serve all the three purposes enumerated.

The increase of power which these mediums give will greatly surprise everyone hitherto unacquainted with their use, and will solve the mysterious technical qualities of a good many modern pictures.

WATER. Those who object to the use of any medium, and are therefore unconcerned with its handling, are nevertheless confronted with the problem of the manipulation of water. There are several ways of laying on a flat or gradated wash. Damping the paper before painting; soaking it for some time in accordance with the nature of the paper; laying it on a sheet of glass; holding it at certain angles while the colour runs in the required direction, are among the prevalent plans. The use of water teems with problems.

THE TEMPERAMENTAL ATTITUDE. Granted that the reader genuinely desires to master the craft the question arises, immediately, how to set about it. The answer depends largely upon temperamental attitude. The ideal temperament is that which regards the task as a splendid adventure, to be pursued to the utmost limits with a joyful determination, and finds a continual fascination in "seeing what will happen." To the ardently inquiring mind, eager to travel beyond the recognized boundaries,

the knowledge of illimitable possibilities will provide a continual inspiration and invest each step with a veritable thrill. The danger (to change the metaphor) is to attempt to come to grips with the enemy by disorderly spasmodic rushes before consolidating each successive position.

To those who are prepared to follow an extensive as well as intensive course of study the following admittedly heroic plan is recommended—

1. Work out all the preliminary exercises.
2. Add any others that occur.
3. Copy the illustrations exactly in accordance with the descriptions.
4. Apply the methods to other subjects.
5. Combine two or more methods when deemed advisable, on still further subjects.
6. Extend in any direction suggested by previous efforts.

A few words of warning cannot be too often repeated and emphasized. The practice of water-colour is peculiar in that some apparently little thing may, in a minute, cause irretrievable ruin. A dirty brush, an insufficient quantity of colour prepared for a wash, the absence of some accessory, may spoil an expensive piece of paper covered with a drawing representing a day's work, and generate a disastrous state of exasperation.

Do everything to avoid the possibility of any preventable accident, so that the work can be pursued in an atmosphere of cheerful calm. Work at or near a table large enough to contain everything that may be required quickly, and get into the habit of placing each article always in the same place so that it can be found at any moment. Never forget that the three most malignant enemies are hurry, uncertainty, and irritation.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS. All the diagrams and most of the sketches and pictures have been specially painted for the purposes of this book. Most of the originals were deliberately made very small so that the process could be more clearly shown. In some cases their usefulness as illustrations of particular methods has detracted from their artistic qualities. This fact should be borne in mind when using any of the methods to which these remarks apply.

CHAPTER II

LAYING A WASH

ONLY the experienced, with unhappy memories of a long succession of blunders behind them, can fully appreciate the value of learning to lay a wash with ease, speed, and certainty. Any reader, therefore, who has the slightest doubt of his powers in that direction is earnestly advised to postpone all other considerations till the necessary skill is acquired. A few hours concentrated on this single object will not only save months of misguided effort but will lay the foundation of technical efficiency. Laying a wash is the fundamental operation in water-colour painting.

There is no especial difficulty in laying a wash. It is not a gift. Little more than care, common-sense and practice is required. If the following directions are followed success should be only a matter of a little time.

Take a saucer ; mix in it the required colour. Mix more than, to the inexperienced, appears to be required. Choose a suitable paper, thick enough to take a wash without perceptible swelling, for if the surface does not remain quite straight the wash is bound to be uneven. A thick paper strained on a drawing board, or pasted to thick cardboard and pinned to a drawing board provides a satisfactory surface. Place the board so that it inclines at an angle of about 30°.

Take a small sponge, dip it into perfectly clean water and squeeze out about one-half of it. Pass the sponge lightly over the whole surface.

Now take a large wide flat fat brush, charge it fully and with a long light, steady, deliberate stroke, draw it right across the top of the paper. Part of the colour will run down, forming a long pool at the bottom of the stroke, while the brush is again being charged. Let the second stroke overlap the first by about half an inch. Continue the process till the surface is covered.

Make the first attempts with much diluted colour, because the stronger the colour the more difficult to handle. Note, for future use, which colours are more amenable. Preserve the successful results ; perhaps later on they can be used for pictures.

Next try a gradated wash. Mix a quantity of fairly strong cobalt. Make the first stroke as before. Then, very quickly, take a brushful of water and add it to the mixture for the second stroke. Proceed in this way right down the paper.

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A smaller amount of colour is necessary for a gradated wash. The greater the gradation required the less colour should be mixed. Only practice can determine the exact amount. As with the flat washes, let the practice of gradated washes serve a practical purpose. Choose colours and combinations that can be used later on for cloudless skies. The following exercises will suggest a fruitful line of procedure.

1. For a mid-day sky: Lay a wash of very pale vermilion gradating to nothing. Turn the paper round and lay a gradated wash of cobalt, of medium strength to pale, over the vermilion wash. See that the first wash is thoroughly dry before applying the second.

2. For an afterglow: Lay a wash of yellowish orange gradating from rather strong to rather pale. Turn the paper round and lay a wash of ceruleum gradating from rather pale to very pale.

When very large spaces have to be covered the brush can be replaced by a small sponge. It is not easy to manipulate on a hard surface as it tends to suck up the colour; and great care must be taken to handle it very lightly for fear of injuring the surface of the more delicate papers.

The method, particularly when applied to large surfaces, is open to several objections: (1) There is often a danger that the second wash may disturb the first. (2) In the most skilful hands the possible number of superimposed washes would therefore be severely limited. (3) If the more opaque colours were used a distinct loss of transparency might happen. (4) The slightest error in manipulation or strength of wash would mean complete failure.

A modification of this method, however, will solve all these difficulties.

Lay each wash appreciably stronger than finally required, and when it is absolutely dry wash it down with a large, flat, rather stiff brush and pure water. By this means the wash will not only be lightened to the extent required; slight unevennesses can often be removed; greater transparency is certain; succeeding washes can be laid with little or no fear of disturbing the previous ones; and any number of washes can be superimposed.

A few experiments will give some idea of what extraordinary subtlety combined with considerable force and transparency can be produced by a succession of contrasting tints. The following exercise, when compared with the first of those suggested above, will serve to indicate the possibilities and value of the modification.

1. For a mid-day sky: (*a*) Lay a pale wash of yellow ochre gradating to nothing. Wash it down. (*b*) Superimpose a pale wash of rose madder gradated to nothing. Wash it down. Superimpose a paler wash of veridian, gradating to nothing. Wash it down. (*d*) Turn the paper round and superimpose a rather stronger wash of cobalt gradating to pale.

CHAPTER III

THE COMBINATION OF COLOURS

THE diagrams on Plate I are intended to indicate a method for discovering what can be done with the pigments at the disposal of the water-colour painter. Three of the brightest and most vividly contrasted colours are chosen—crimson alizarin, French blue, and aureolin. The object is to find (1) what happens when any two colours are superimposed, (2) what happens when two or three are mixed.

Three facts will immediately occur to the most unobservant—the enormous range, brilliance, and variety made possible by such a simple means. It would almost appear as if no other pigment need be used to produce any combination of tint and tone. Further experiments with other pigments, however, will reveal the limitations. For instance, Antwerp blue and chrome yellow will produce a more livid green. But if this Plate did nothing more than promote a desire to wisely restrict the palette for any given picture an excellent purpose would be served.

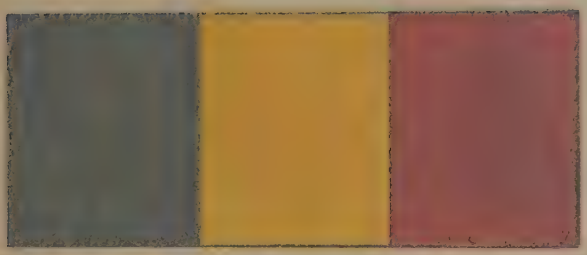
Most students, and not a few painters, use a large number of pigments when half the number would cover the same range. This is not a suggestion to select a few colours and stick to them for all purposes ; it is a plea for getting any given range by the simplest possible means. The painter's business, as a craftsman, is to know the utmost his materials are capable of doing, and to develop the skill to exploit their characteristic qualities. The expression of a conception is difficult enough under the most favourable circumstances. No artist can afford the expenditure of time, and the wastage of nervous energy due to any lack of knowledge of the latent powers of his materials.

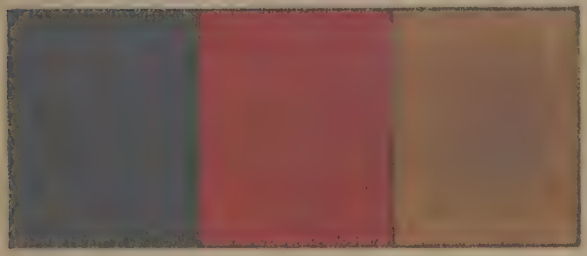
The second impression is just as surprising, viz. the difference between the results obtained by reversing the superimposition of any two colours. Blue on yellow gives a rather dark dull blue green ; yellow on blue gives a light bright yellow green. Here the contrast is very marked. The two combinations of blue and red also give differences, but not to the same extent. The explanation of these differences is concerned mainly with the composition of the pigment. What are usually called transparent colours are to some extent opaque—the term transparent is only relative—and the more nearly opaque the pigment the more it influences the combination—another fact revealing a new field of inquiry.

The recognition of these fundamental facts will give purpose and

PLATE I

Preliminary exercises on colour combination by mixing and by superposition. These show the possibilities of three contrasting colours, and should be regarded as a starting-point for further experiment on the lines suggested on pages 9 and 11.





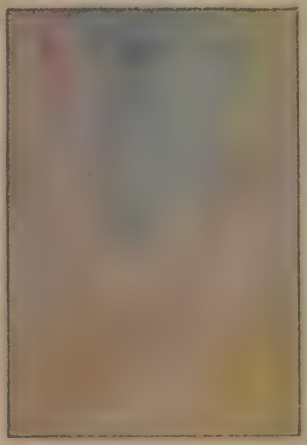
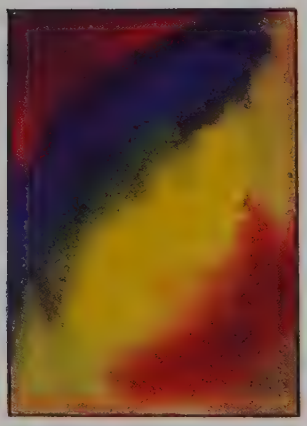


PLATE II.
Combination of Colours.

PLATE I

Preliminary exercises on colour combination by mixing and by superposition. These show the possibilities of three contrasting colours, and should be regarded as a starting-point for further experiment on the lines suggested on pages 9 and 11.



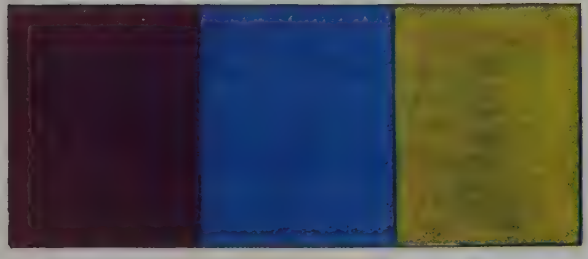


PLATE I.
Combination of Colours.

direction to the consequent investigations, which should continue in a perfectly orderly way, proceeding from the powerful and obvious to the subtle and refined. First try all the combinations of red, blue, and yellow from Antwerp blue, chrome yellow, and vermilion to cobalt light-red and yellow ochre, and note the progression from the strident and positive to the delicate and elusive. Then take sets of three pigments, excluding red, yellow, or blue, and in proceeding down the scale note when colours are repeated, and, what is much more important, observe how restricted combination often produces satisfying schemes for particular purposes. Whenever one occurs use it in a picture, or in a sketch for a picture.

For instance, after completing the picture shown in Plate IV, trace the outline and transfer it to another sheet of paper, and paint it with a combination of yellow ochre, burnt sienna, and ultramarine. The result will not be so realistic, but if the colours are judiciously balanced a very satisfactory colour scheme should result.

Or take the picture completed on Plate VII and turn it into a moonlight scene, using pink, green, and purple with subdued tone contrasts and hard edges. The lack of fidelity might be amply compensated by its decorative completeness.

Or take the picture on Plate V, and by using a subdued scheme of yellow ochre, raw umber, and cobalt, turn it into a cool grey summer day. As these are not exercises in the observation of nature their absence of likeness to any particular effect is of little concern. The present purpose is to find out what can be done with certain restricted combinations, and the possible use to which they may be placed later on.

It need not be said that to attempt anything approaching exhaustive experiments into every conceivable combination would be absurd, because no time would be left for painting. But there can be little doubt that in the early stages of a painter's career an hour spent in intelligent and methodical analysis will save a day of misadventures and accompanying disappointment.

If any evidence is needed to provide stimulus, a visit to almost any exhibition of miscellaneous water-colours will emphasize the need for knowledge. Here and there pictures will stand out by reason of their clean efficiency, and appear to be painted with superior colours, while some of the other pictures seem to be made of mud.

Though it is true, of course, that the most efficient technical display may be an entire failure as a work of art, it is just as true that bungling and ignorance always tend to a decrease in artistic value. The ideal picture would be a combination of supreme conception and perfect technique.

PLATE II

Plate II, " The Market Place, Siena, Italy," shows an example somewhat in the style of the early school of water-colour art. The pencil brings out salient points that are often missed in a painting of deeper tone values ; in any case a tinted painting of this style in conjunction with three or four other colour studies of the same subject done out of doors is invaluable when needed for reference in the studio.

This water-colour was done on a yellowish-tinted paper with a fairly smooth surface.

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The Market Place, Siena, Italy.

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CHAPTER IV

OUTLINE AND WASH

PLATES III and IV show, in two stages, an example of the same style as that illustrated in the previous plate, applied to an elaborately detailed composition.

Use a rather smooth paper, a thick cartridge or a "hot-pressed" hand-made paper. Make a very careful drawing of every detail with a faint pencil line, or transfer it from a drawing made on a sheet of thin paper. Then go over every line with brown indelible ink, diluting with water for the distant parts of the picture. When dry, clean the whole surface with very soft india rubber or bread crumbs.

Sponge the whole surface with clean water and take off the surface moisture with blotting paper. Then give it a preliminary wash of very pale yellow ochre with a touch of brown. If the picture is not large—say about twice as wide as the example—the painting should cause little difficulty to anyone who has practised laying flat washes as directed in a previous chapter; because the area of each wash is small, the outlines have a softening effect on the washes, and a little unevenness will often make for improvement.

Commence with the lightest and brightest colours and see that each is quite dry before superimposing. Use the smallest possible number of colours. Yellow ochre, vermilion, French ultramarine, and veridian will do, if mixed correctly, everything required.

The second stage, apart from a few corrections, completes the picture by varied washes of grey for the parts in shadow—paler and bluer as the objects repeated recede. French ultramarine, vermilion, and a little yellow ochre will produce every shadow.

Regarded as a technical exercise, this is merely an easy introduction to sterner work in future attempts. But regarded pictorially, it is a complete and expressive method, especially when applied to a subject where topographical detail is predominant.

PLATE III

The first stage of an example of a subject demanding exact delineation of many interesting features and details. The distinguishing characteristic of the method is the use of indelible brown ink outlines before the painting is begun. The method is described on page 13.

PLATE III.
Toledo (First Stage).

PLATE III

The first stage of an example of a subject demanding exact delineation of many interesting features and details. The distinguishing characteristic of the method is the use of indelible brown ink outlines before the painting is begun. The method is described on page 13.

PLATE III.
Toledo (First Stage).

CHAPTER V

WASH AND OUTLINE

PLATE V illustrates the fact that the distinction between "Outline and Wash" and "Wash and Outline" is a very real one. The first tends to create rigidity as it encourages the painting of small patches to fill the spaces between outlines. Otherwise many lines might become partly or wholly obliterated by dark, or partially opaque, colours. The second, by postponing the ink outline to the final stage, suggests the painting of broad masses and full tones without restraint.

Used to the full extent of its latent powers this method is, admittedly, not a method for a beginner. A fairly accurate copy of Plate V is a comparatively easy exercise, but the application of the method to original composition is by no means simple. It needs power born of cultivated taste and ripe experience. The possessor of the faculty for seizing sudden inspirations with deftness and force will find this method an admirable one for combining a general effect of breadth with the delineation of intricate detail. The subject was chosen to show how the representation of great masses of sunlight and shadow can be strengthened rather than modified by the emphasis of detailed form in nearly every part of the picture.

Use a thick paper with a smooth surface. Make a clear drawing in pencil. Indicate the main divisions and the exact shape of the distant hill very clearly, but show only the boundaries of the woods.

Excepting the sky, allow the colours to run slightly into one another. Endeavour to keep the whole picture wet. Take off colour with a clean brush and add darks as the paper dries. If, accidentally, an interesting shape should occur, try to make use of it. But be most careful to retain the tonal relations—the light distance and foreground and the dark middle distance.

If this method is too difficult, try it in two paintings, commencing the second before the first has quite dried. The first attempt is almost certain to result in one serious blunder, viz. the exaggeration of tone distinctions in the darker portion of the picture. The masses of trees are decidedly darker than the surroundings mainly on account of the large number of black lines. Before these lines are drawn the contrast between the trees and the ground is one of colour rather than tone. Here and

4—(9101)

PLATE IV

The final stage of the picture illustrating the use of Outline and Wash. The first stage is shown in Plate III, and the method is described on page 13.

PLATE IV.
Toledo (Final Stage).

there the trees are lighter. This is the main fact to bear in mind while painting.

The outlines will require a very fine pen for the sky and distance and a broader one for the remainder. The power of indicating undulating surfaces and crowds of trees of various shapes, just as an etcher might do, will depend on understanding that can only come from continuous observation.

This method, like that dealt with in the previous chapter, was a favourite with the old water-colour masters, and many fine examples are to be found in public galleries and reproduced in various publications. They should be studied with the greatest care.

Of late years, after a long period of comparative neglect, several applications have returned to favour among the modern schools, partly as a reaction against the prevalence of degenerate inefficiency, but mainly out of a recognition of its power to emphasize structure, solidity, and design. As a corrective to sloppy, superficially attractive "artistic" sketches, devoid of solid facts, the method may save many a student from a still common danger. Indeed, it would often be a good test of the value of a sketch to go over it with a pen and see how much of it could be resolved into exact form. Used, too, in tone sketches to accompany colour notes, the method should be of the utmost service; especially when the finished picture is to be done on a much larger scale.

Many exercises for gaining facility in the method indoors will readily occur to anyone who is keenly interested. Here is one—

Take a photograph of a subject consisting largely of trees and woods. Sketch the masses in pencil and indicate the disposition of light and shade. Paint the whole in the manner suggested earlier in this chapter, and when dry add outlines from the photograph until the required effect is obtained.

A few studies of this kind, though probably of little value in themselves, and perhaps dangerous if often repeated, would serve to give the beginner a measure of knowledge, facility, and confidence with which to tackle a similar subject from nature.

PLATE V

This plate illustrates a method somewhat similar to that used in Plate IV. In this case the outlines, in indian ink, were drawn after the painting was finished in order to define both structure and details, and to emphasize the rugged character of the scene without losing the broad effect of sunshine and shadow. The method is explained on pages 15 and 17.

PLATE V.
Brown Autumn.

CHAPTER VI

TRANSPARENT WASH

THIS simple study, shown in two stages on Plates VI and VII, illustrates the next step in technical difficulty, and approaches to literal representation. Outlines are disregarded and full reliance is placed upon the wash.

Strain or mount a half-imperial sheet of coarse-grained paper, preferably thick "hot-pressed," and make a clear thin outline in pencil. Mix, in a saucer, a quantity of yellow ochre with a little light red, sufficient to cover the whole surface except that seen through the doorway and the white donkeys.

Sponge the whole surface with clean water and press with blotting paper till nearly dry. Use a very large brush and take a flat wash over the wall and add a little rose madder when painting the ground. If the wash dries with a positive edge round the doorway it will only serve to heighten the sunlight effect. When this wash is thoroughly dry lay a pale yellow wash on the houses and a slightly gradated wash of cobalt for the sky. Before the latter dries drop a little green on the left-hand side and let it run into the blue. While these two washes are drying mix a wash of deep grey (French blue, light red, and a little yellow) for the darkest shadows. The complicated shape of the shadow round the doorway demands careful and speedy manipulation. As the prime necessity is to keep the whole wash wet at the same time lay the paper flat and cover the whole space with water. Add a little pale grey to the water to see that the correct shape is covered. Then take the dark grey wash into the wet space very quickly with a large brush. Before it dries drop in a little green or brown here and there to give variety to the shadow. Tilt the paper to let these additions run slightly. Let the wash dry in a horizontal position and with hard edges. The smaller washes should not need preliminary damping. When these are dry paint the roofs with varied washes of yellow ochre and rose madder. The remainder of the first stage should need no detailed explanation.

The second stage consists for the most part of intermediate washes, modifying the extreme contrast between both tone and colour, and between the high lights and the deep shadows. Mixtures of reds, blues, and yellows in various proportions, painted in most cases quite crisply, will effect the desired result. This done there remain only the details of the figures,

PLATE VI

The first stage of a picture painted with flat and slightly gradated washes, by a method described fully on pages 17 and 21. This method, while applicable to many classes of subject, is particularly suitable for the rendering of strong sunlight.

PLATE . VI.
A Spanish Gateway (First Stage)

the dark touches in the carving over the gateway, and a few details which need not be particularized. It will be noticed that a figure has been added to the group. This was not left, deliberately, for treatment in the second stage. It was an afterthought, and its need only became evident after the rest of the painting had been completed. Also a few passages had to be wiped out—part of one of the donkeys and some lights on the gateway. This always was not part of the original scheme. Both are examples of little alterations and corrections due to insufficient care and foresight.

The remarks upon washing down on page 8 might well be applied here to all stages except the final washes. Subtle effects of gradation and texture could be obtained by painting the larger washes considerably stronger than required, and washing them down unevenly ; using a hog hair brush, where necessary, to get the required roughness.

Trace the drawing and transfer the outline to a piece of thick, coarse hand-made paper. Lay a strong wash of yellow ochre on the wall and ground. Wash it down unevenly as desired. Superimpose a wash of rose madder. Wash it down unevenly. Treat the roofs in the same manner. Proceed in this way several times if needed. But paint the sky, the shadows, and the other details in the same way as directed for Plate VII, because washing out is bound to obliterate the essential sharpness of edges demanded in all these cases.

This method, with slight modifications, is perhaps the most popular with present-day painters, and the student would be well advised, at this stage, to take every available opportunity for studying such pictures in exhibitions, or the excellent reproductions appearing in books and art magazines. It will then be noted that the method is particularly well suited to the representation of positive effects of strong sunlight where the main interest is in the foreground, rather than to subjects characterized by vague indeterminate subtleties.

But better than any other method of study is the privilege of seeing a competent artist at work. More can be learned from a single demonstration than from chapters of written description. And if, in addition, pictures in various stages of completion can be examined, the observant student should carry away a host of invaluable hints. It is a great pity that the practice of the demonstration by masters of technical methods is exceedingly rare.

PLATE VII

The final stage of the picture commenced in Plate VI. The method is described on pages 17 and 21.

PLATE VII.
A Spanish Gateway (Final Stage).

CHAPTER VII

THE DRY METHOD AND "SCRATCHING OUT"

THE lower illustration on Plate VIII illustrates a method much favoured by the early water-colour painters, especially for skies. Use a very coarse "not-pressed" paper. After dipping the brush into the required colour shake out as much as possible. Hold the brush at a considerable angle so as to bring the side into contact with the paper. Move it very quickly and lightly, especially at the edges of the wash, so as to get the required roughness. By this means an apparent gradation of tone can be obtained—darkest where the wash is solid, and lightest where it is roughest.

It would be scarcely possible to carry out a preconceived idea in every detail by this method; the most proficient painter would be certain to need to make corrections. This can be done quite easily by scraping with a penknife. When performed deftly it should be difficult to see where the painting ends and the scraping begins. For long thin strips of cloud, such as the horizontal ones shown in the illustration referred to, scraping is by far the more simple and satisfactory way.

Two points need to be kept in mind: (1) the danger of abusing the method by overdoing the scraping, and (2) the need for painting the rest of the picture in the same hard, dry, rough manner.

As illustrations of the abuse, as well as of the successful use, of this method, the old masters might well be consulted; for at one time the practice of "scratching out" trespassed beyond all reasonable bounds and degenerated to a vice. To all but the exceptionally strong minded its insinuating ease is a temptation to sneak out of difficulties otherwise easily overcome.

Apart from the particular kind of clouds illustrated on the Plate, certain classes of subjects justify the reserved and unobtrusive use of the method. Small patches of glistening light on waves and streams and waterfalls, for example, which could not be left when laying previous washes, may reasonably be scratched out. Lights on wet grass, roads, and stones might sometimes make any other course impossible except by using body-colour. Small white flowers might, in some cases, prove a justification.

5—(989)

PLATE VIII

The upper sketch illustrates the use of wiping out in two ways, described on page 23. It was painted on a very small scale to show the effect of canvas-grained paper.

The lower sketch illustrates the combination of the dry method with scratching out and its suitability for certain sky effects. This also was painted on too small a scale for good artistic effect in order that the method might be more clearly shown.

PLATE VIII.
Wiping Out and Scratching Out.

CHAPTER VIII

TRANSPARENT WASH ON TINTED PAPER

FEW tinted papers are suited to painting in transparent colours when a literal rendering of the colours and tones of nature are desired. But the paler varieties are sometimes surprisingly satisfactory.

An example on Plate IX will serve as an instance. No. 3 shows a gradated wash of emerald green on white paper. The effect is rather raw ; but when the same colour is painted on a rich cream tinted paper in No. 4 the radiance of a sky at after-glow is realized by a single wash.

This must not be taken as advice to paint skies with emerald green, as there is no doubt that this beautiful colour is affected considerably by impure atmosphere. But it is a suggestion to search for papers which can be used in the same manner with permanent colours.

Plate X illustrates the value of the same paper in an entirely different kind of effect. Here the sky was rendered in a wash of pale purple (cobalt and rose madder), while most of the surface representing the flock of sheep is left untouched and a warm sunny tone is preserved throughout.

The picture, entitled "The River Doubs," near Besançon, France (Plate XI), is an example of transparent wash on a tinted surface. The tint of the paper is clearly seen in the sky, which was allowed to retain its natural tint, without any sort of colour being used to destroy its flat serenity.

The intention of the artist was to obtain as much detailed information as possible in an out-door sketch. There was no striving to obtain fleeting effects of light and shadow. Clouds would be of little value in a sketch of this type as the subject is essentially a winding river surrounded by fields and adjoining hills. A long time was spent in drawing the subject with an ordinary "B" lead pencil. There is nothing really accidental in the drawing and painting. Notice how every house and cottage adjoining the further bend of the river shows evidences of precise drawing, also the minute trees and lines in the far distance. The middle distance from left to right, i.e. the hills with their contours silhouetted against the sky, were originally painted in the same open detailed manner as the spotty effect of adjacent trees, fields, etc., but it being possible to bind together by a flat wash of bluish grey, this colour was then washed over the whole middle distance with the exception of the intermediate river, thus giving the picture that accented touch which keeps the subject from being dull

PLATE IX

A page of experiments referred to on pages 25 and 31. Nos. 1 and 2 show the strikingly contrasted results obtained by using the same colours on the same kind of papers in two different ways. Nos. 3 and 4 illustrate the value of toned papers used with transparent water colours. Nos. 5 and 6, painted on very coarse paper for the purposes of clearer explanation, illustrate the different effects produced by the superposition of certain colours. This branch of water colour, which is seldom studied or applied, is referred to in detail on page 31.

PLATE IX.
The Use of Tinted Papers. Granulation.

without in any way losing the detailed information so necessary in this complicated landscape subject.

Delicately tinted paper like the colour of this example is excellent to work on, without the aid of any body colour. The pure colour of the paper helps each wash or touch of colour that may be used on its surface. So that whilst freshness of colour is easily kept, yet all the painting has a characteristic tone value which is far more difficult to obtain when painting in pure wash on white drawing paper.

When darker tinted papers are used, a few touches of body colour (if artfully applied to fitting subjects) can render unique effects of brilliance or of serenity.

For instance, a rather warm grey paper, of medium depth, may almost be regarded as a half-painted picture of certain simple night effects. A few washes of flat, or nearly flat, colour, and two or three spots of bright body colour (representing, say, artificial lights such as illuminated windows) can produce results unattainable by any other water-colour treatment.

An extension of this method is well worth trying, although not illustrated in this book.

Choose a subject with a large proportion of dark masses and a very small proportion of strong light. Take, for example, a subject where the artist is facing the light and the dark masses are all in shadow—a group of dark boats and sails in front of a jetty, and a very small amount of bright sky and reflections.

Paint the dark portions in their true local colours with transparent colour, and if the paper will serve for any parts of the picture leave it untouched. These dark masses will then have almost, if not quite, the effect of being in shadow as soon as the bright lights are added in clear decisive touches of body colour.

There is always a tendency, in methods of this kind, to sacrifice hard truth to easy facility, and the philosopher's counsel to "live dangerously" is only for the strong-willed!

PLATE X

An illustration of the value of a tinted paper in conjunction with transparent colours. Nearly one-third of the surface of the paper is left untouched. The treatment of the sky is another illustration of the use of granulation. The picture is referred to in detail on page 25.

PLATE X.
Afterglow and Moonrise.

CHAPTER IX

THE GRANULATED WASH

MANY painters in water-colours are aware that some colours occasionally dry unevenly—in a series of blobs of solid colour which gives a mottled effect—but few know exactly why. Nor do they know how to control the action, that is to say, to secure it or avoid it at will. This is one of the most fascinating and least understood branches of water-colour technique, and will well repay for thorough inquiry; for to those who are looking for extensions of power over the medium, the results will have all the wonder of the revelation of a deep secret.

Take a piece of heavy coarse-grained paper, such as Whatman's "not-pressed" 300 lb., mounted on thick cardboard, and fix it firmly to a drawing board so that it will not warp in the slightest degree. An absolutely plane surface is essential.

First give it a wash of pale orange, weakening towards the top of the paper. Leave till quite dry. Mix a considerable quantity of cerulean blue in a saucer—about twice as much as would be required for an ordinary flat wash.

Place the drawing board at a slope of about 15° with the table. Take a large wide brush capable of holding a deal of colour; charge it fully and draw it across the top of the paper so lightly that the hairs scarcely touch the paper. Add a brushful of water in the saucer and extend the wash by another stroke. Repeat the process as quickly as possible till the paper is completely covered.

Immediately this is done lift the board to an angle of about 60°, when the wash begins to run down; then tilt the board in the opposite direction and the wash will run back. Do this several times and note how the pigment separates into solid spots leaving spaces of clean, or almost clean, paper between, while the water has separated from the pigment. When the pigment does not move with the water let the water drain off, place the board at the same angle as when the wash was painted, and leave to dry.

That is how No. 4 on Plate XII was painted. It will be noticed that the spots on No. 5 of the same plate differ considerably from No. 4, being larger and less decided in shape. This softer effect was obtained by omitting to drain the water and by laying the board quite flat while drying.

A little practice will soon prove that the paler the wash the simpler

PLATE XI

An example of transparent washes on a tinted surface. The tint of the paper is clearly seen in the sky, which was untouched by colour so that it could preserve its natural serenity. Details of the methods employed are given on page 27.

PLATE XI.
The River Doubs, near Besançon, France.

the process, and that if there is not water enough to keep all the pigment moving at the same time the wash will not have a regular gradation.

Once the method is mastered it can be made to produce surprising results, particularly in cloudless skies. It is doubtful whether the sense of vibration in No. 4 could be obtained in water-colour by any other means.

To those who see in this method desirable possibilities of extension, the simple illustrations (Figs. 4 and 5) will be regarded as preliminaries to an intensely interesting course of investigations. It will be found that very few pigments act in this way, and each of them act in a slightly different way. Several pigments, such as Antwerp blue and vermilion, do not separate at all. Figs. 5 and 6, on Plate IX, illustrate this fact quite dramatically. They were painted on the back of a piece of wallpaper with a coarse grain composed of little pits. In Fig. 5 the emerald green flowed into the pits and formed solid masses of pigment, leaving the rest of the paper with a very pale wash. In other words the pits were filled with masses of particles close together, but the raised parts were left with a few separated particles. But in Fig. 6 the vermilion insisted upon covering the whole surface quite evenly like a stain. Thus it happened that when the emerald green was painted on the vermilion the result was a series of pure emerald green separated by a brownish colour made by the combination of strong red showing through the thin wash of green. But when the vermilion was superimposed on the emerald green it resulted in an almost flat tint of brownish-red.

As the experiments proceed pictorial applications will inevitably arise, and might well be tried as they occur. For instance, the painting of a picture in colours that will be corrected and complete by a final wash of cobalt contains the germ of considerable possibilities.

Figs. 1 and 2, on Plate IX, are still more curious and suggestive. Each was painted on the same kind of paper (a coarse-grained "not-pressed"), and with the same colours, emerald green and rose madder. In Fig. 1 a wash of rose madder was first laid on. It separated, but not so much as emerald green would have done. When quite dry the emerald green was superimposed and separated into patches, maintaining its original colour. In Fig. 2 the paper was made quite wet and the two colours were dropped in together. This time a more decided unevenness resulted, but the original colours were not maintained.

The three figures on the left on Plate XII carry the investigations a step further. No. 1 is a flat wash of vermilion which would not separate. No. 2 from left is a gradated wash of cobalt on the vermilion, giving a purple. In No. 3 from left a gradated wash of emerald green is added, resulting in a subtle grey composed of green, blue, and pink spots.

It will now be seen that if this method is to be perfected the action of

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PLATE XII

These illustrations are reproduced to the full size of the originals in order to show the remarkable effects of granulation produced by certain colours when used in the manner described on pages 29 and 31.

PLATE XII.
Granulation.

each colour must be tested individually and in conjunction with all the others. When this has been done the inquirer will be provided with a new and almost unexploited means of expression which, if suitably applied, might revolutionize his painting.

All the successive steps cannot be detailed here, but the following suggestions will serve to indicate the general direction which the readers' investigations might usefully take—

1. See what can be done, on papers of various surfaces, with cerulean, cobalt, emerald green, cobalt green, and rose madder, and any other colour that will separate, however slightly.
2. Try combinations of these colours on the same papers.
3. Try each colour and combinations on prepared grounds.
4. Note, while experimenting, how practical purposes might be served, and apply pictures whenever possible.

Those rare painters, exceptionally endowed with a decorative sense allied to the enviable ability to seize sudden and fleeting suggestion, will find in this method a source of never-ending delight. Accidental combinations will often take fantastic forms that would never occur to the most imaginative.

Take a sheet of the coarsest hand-made paper which has been pasted to a thick board. Fix it firmly to a drawing board with tacks so that the edges will not turn up. Then lay it absolutely flat on a table. To make certain, test with a spirit level.

Now take any colours which have behaved in eccentric manner and pour them on the papers in various strengths and quantities. When the paper is covered let some large drops, or a tiny stream of pure water, fall from a height of 2 or 3 ft., and splash into the colour. Lift the drawing board, tilt it at various angles, and let the colours run as they will. Take off some colour here, add a little there, as pleases the fancy. The chances are that vastly interesting things will happen—charming, unexpected conceptions born by accident. In any case some parts will be almost certain to suggest how the method can be used in some deliberately designed subject. Grey stains on old buildings, textures for foregrounds, and walls, falling rain-clouds, quaint patterns—these and many others may occur on the same sheet of paper, and may some day prove more useful than as many laborious sketches. And if an addition—chinese white—is added, the suggestions will multiply prodigiously.

Here and there in many modern exhibitions are to be found evidences of growing interest in this method.

PLATE XIII

An example of the class of subject where wiping out from wet washes can be used for soft effects on canvas-grained paper. The method is explained on page 35, and further illustrated in Plates VIII and XIV.

PLATE XIII.
St. Paul's, London.

CHAPTER X

WIPING OUT

ONE of the greatest technical difficulties, when using any of the foregoing methods, is to leave small passages of lights of the exact shape and clearness required. Indeed, many subjects would have to be avoided altogether but for some methods of removing part or all of the colour from certain portions of the picture after the paint has been laid on. The commonest method is that generally known as "wiping out."

A few simple experiments will serve to show the extent to which it can be effected satisfactorily, and the class of subject to which it can be reasonably applied.

Take two small pieces of paper—one hot-pressed, and the other coarse not-pressed. Lay on each a strong wash of cobalt and dry thoroughly. Then lay each piece flat on the table and cover a space, say, as big as a shilling with as much water as it will hold without overflowing. At the end of a minute dry with blotting paper, using considerable pressure. Most of the colour will come away from the smooth hard surface of the hot-pressed, but very little from the uneven and comparatively soft surface of the not-pressed paper. Fill the spaces with water again and rub them with a stiff clean brush. When blotted the hot-pressed will be quite clean, but the not-pressed will still be slightly stained. Try the same experiment on a very porous paper and comparatively little colour will come away.

Repeat the experiments with each colour in the box and keep them for reference till the results can be remembered.

From these experiments there emerge two facts so important as to almost dominate the painting of a picture where wiping out is a prominent feature, viz. the necessity for a paper with a smooth hard surface, and the restriction of the palette to those colours that can be wiped out, to the extent required, on the paper chosen.

The choice of paper is complicated by the fact that most smooth papers are exceedingly difficult to handle, as a superimposed wash is apt to disturb the one beneath. One paper, however, a cartridge paper stamped to look like canvas, and having an almost burnished surface, takes superimposed washes if laid on lightly, and is particularly amenable to "wiping out." This paper was used for the illustrations on Plates VIII, XIII, and XIV. As it is rather thin it should be strained or mounted, preferably the former.

PLATE XIV

This Plate shows two examples of wiping out. The upper sketch illustrates the use of undertints of indelible inks in conjunction with wiping out, and minimizes certain limitations. The method is treated more elaborately in Plate XVI, and is explained on pages 35 and 37.

The lower sketch shows the especial suitability of wiping out to the rendering of dramatic sky effects. Two methods of wiping out are employed. A detailed explanation is given on page 35.

PLATE XIV.
Two Examples of Wiping Out.

WIPING OUT

Almost any paper, however, can be made amenable to " wiping out " by the adoption of a very simple expedient.

Mix a strong wash of some colour that does not wipe out easily. Add to it a little glycerine and apply the mixture to what is, in other circumstances, an unsatisfactory paper for the purpose. The relative quantity of glycerine can be arrived at only after several trials. When the proportion has been found, the colour, instead of sinking into the paper, will float in a bath of glycerine and water for a considerable time on account of the slow-drying nature of the glycerine. During this time the colour will come away from almost all papers with the slightest touch of the brush ; and when the wash is quite dry, the colour can be removed from any paper with a fairly hard, smooth surface.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the very suitability of the paper to the process creates artistic limitations, because the more amenable the paper the more nearly white the wiped out lights ; consequently the range of subjects tends to be restricted to those effects where white lights only are needed.

This difficulty can be met to a considerable degree by a method which has hitherto received very little attention, viz. the painting of preliminary washes of indelible inks, diluted as required. The upper picture on Plate XIV is a simple example of how indelible ink might play a distinctly important part and produce effects impossible to obtain in any other way. The picture first received a wash of ink over the sky, varying from the pink on the left to red on the right, producing pink clouds on the left and showing through the blue paint on the right sufficiently to give a suggestion of purple. The rest of the paper was stained with a flat wash of yellow ink. The whole of the trees were then covered with a wash of brown and the yellow trees were wiped out with a very small stiff-haired brush.

This method, with all its possibilities of extension, has its limitations also, in so far as the inks influence the colour of the superimposed washes. A dark colour painted on a pale ink might scarcely be affected by the influence of a strong ink showing through a pale transparent wash.

No. 2, on Plate XV, illustrates this point where, in spite of the blue-purple washes, the orange ink dominates the whole colour scheme. Such effects as those shown in Nos. 1 and 3 on the same plate necessitate the use of strong body colour to obliterate the streaks of red, green, and orange inks. But used with discretion and forethought in conjunction with a suitable subject, the method gives ample opportunities for exceptional and powerful effects.

Wiping out is generally effected with a clean damp brush, and in many circumstances there is no other way. But few artists are acquainted with

PLATE XV

Three notes showing how indelible inks can be used for painting reflections in water. Nos. 1 and 2 were covered with opaque colour, No. 3 with transparent granulating colour. Each was painted on paper with a smooth, hard surface, which lends itself readily to wiping out. The method is explained on page 37, and further illustrated in Plates XIV and XVI.

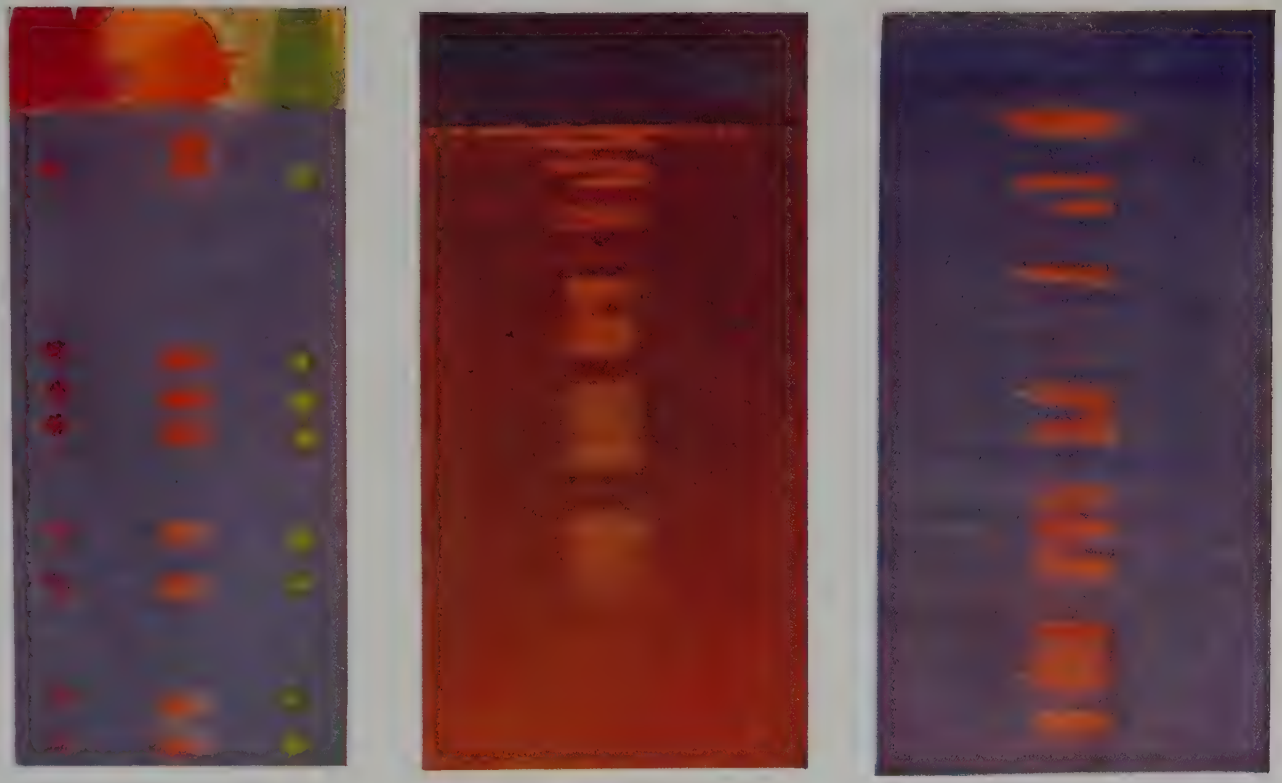

PLATE XV.
The Use of Indelible Inks.

the almost magical properties of butter-muslin. A few exercises will indicate its value and point to many further uses.

Lay a much gradated wash of cobalt on a rather smooth paper, and, without preliminary drawing or thought, dab with a small loose wad of butter- muslin to produce white clouds. First dab very lightly ; then more heavily on the lighter parts of the clouds, varying the pressure as required. The accidental effects will be certain to give unexpected and delightful suggestions.

Lay a wash of the same colour with a strong admixture of glycerine. Note the softness of the edges when the wash is very wet and the increasing definition when the wash begins to dry.

If a large wash persists in remaining uneven try to restore it with a large loose wad of butter-muslin. All sorts of interesting things may happen !

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PLATE XVI

A preliminary sketch for an elaborate picture in which indelible inks play a highly important part, covering most of the surface, and dominating the colour scheme. Wiping out is freely employed, and the partial opacity of certain colours classed as transparent is exploited. The method is fully explained on pages 35 and 37, and further illustrated in Plates XIV and XV.

PLATE XVI.
The Vermilion Screen.

CHAPTER XI

PASTE METHODS

ON Plate XVII there are shown three sketches demonstrating the use of ordinary flour paste in conjunction with water-colour painting. Each of these three sketches were done on cartridge paper. There is no body colour used in any one of the three examples.

It is a comparatively easy matter to make the paste necessary for the purpose of water-colour painting by this method. A couple of dessert-spoonfuls of ordinary self-raising flour can be put in a small pudding basin, to which is added just enough cold water so that when the mixture is well stirred and ground with a spoon, a moderately thick creamy mixture is obtained, but not so thick that it is unable to rest with a flat surface in the basin. Next, from a kettle of boiling water, pour slowly but steadily into the basin, stirring vigorously and continually with the spoon until the paste becomes quite glutinous and thick. Too much boiling water will thin the paste so as to be of little use for the required purpose. When the paste is cold it is ready for use.

There are two ways of using paste in water-colour painting. One is to dip the brush, either with or without water, directly into the paste and then into the colour. The other method is to prepare the paper with a coat of paste with a flat wide brush, precisely in the same manner as is adopted for sticking down a home-made luggage label for a parcel or trunk. Then brush well so that a fairly thin coat is evenly spread out on the drawing paper and free from any suggestion of different thicknesses or lumps on the surface. The bottom sketch on Plate XVII was done in this way. After the whole of the paper was covered with a coat of flour paste, various pure water-colours such as yellow ochre, cadmium, violet, viridian, and burnt-sienna were painted directly on to the *wet* paste surface, in spontaneous colour blobs, over the whole of the light portions of the quarry, and no consideration was given as to the ultimate structural form of the quarry. Whilst the paint was still very wet, a square-shaped water-colour brush, quite free from any suggestion of colour impurity and just moist enough for the purpose, was used for licking up the various colour blobs. As the sketch clearly shows, this brush was used mostly in a vertical direction and pressed very strongly into the paint at each stroke of the brush. Another point to take into account is the importance

PLATE XVII

These three sketches, made on cartridge paper, show some results of the use of flour paste as an adjunct to water-colour painting. No body colour was used. Details of the method appear on pages 41 and 43.

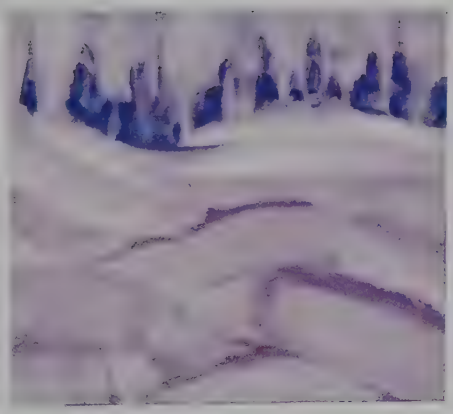

PLATE XVII.
Paste Methods.

of washing the brush in clean water after each brush stroke, and of then squeezing out most of the water.

It is interesting to observe how the shadows (suggesting more or less structural forms) are caused by the colours left undisturbed by the absorbent paint brush. The lightest parts of the sketch demonstrate the fact that the clean paint brush has taken off all the colour that may have happened to be there in its original state.

A most interesting feature in this method of painting, whether on a prepared surface of paste, or with the use of paste directly with the paint, is the way in which the paste holds the water-colour and prevents it from spreading about in an unruly manner. In this respect there is a certain similarity to oil painting which, when used in a normal style, gives a well-defined brush mark on the surface of the oil pigment. The top right sketch bears a strong resemblance to the texturous surface of oil paint brush marks. Here the slightly damp brush was put directly into the paste and then mixed with the purple tint before any painting was done on the cartridge paper.

The well-defined streakiness or brush mark contours are easily rendered when the colour is used with mostly paste and very little water.

The top left sketch was painted with a little paste mixed with plenty of water. The colour, like transparent wash painting, spread with ease on the surface of the paper. To obtain the brush mark in this sketch, the same brush already charged with colour was laid flat on the painted surface, and pressed firmly over the ferrule end of the sable hairs, this pressure causing the light spot to appear at the foot of each brush stroke. These three examples of Plate XVII were all done whilst in a wet condition, as regards both paste and colour.

In the top right sketch the deepest tint was added in the higher portion after the rest of the sketch was completed, but before drying.

Students are advised to practise with boldness, on fairly smooth paper, a number of exercises in the handling of paste. Use also paste of varying thicknesses. Trees, cottages, rivers, and especially mountains showing some form of rock strata, are all ready to be experimented with in this style of handling. Generally the easiest way is to prepare the paper with a flat coat of paste, and to paint on that with pure water-colour in the method previously described.

There are, of course, many possibilities in paste methods for expressing different styles of landscape painting. Powerful mountains of deep-toned tints can be expressed as readily as delicate, light misty subjects. The intelligent student should try many ways of expressing varying landscapes and figure subjects. There is no doubt at all that many texturous surfaces can be obtained with the aid of paste.

PLATE XVIII

Colour sketches made on substantial cartridge paper that has been previously scraped with a penknife. The methods are detailed on pages 45 and 47.

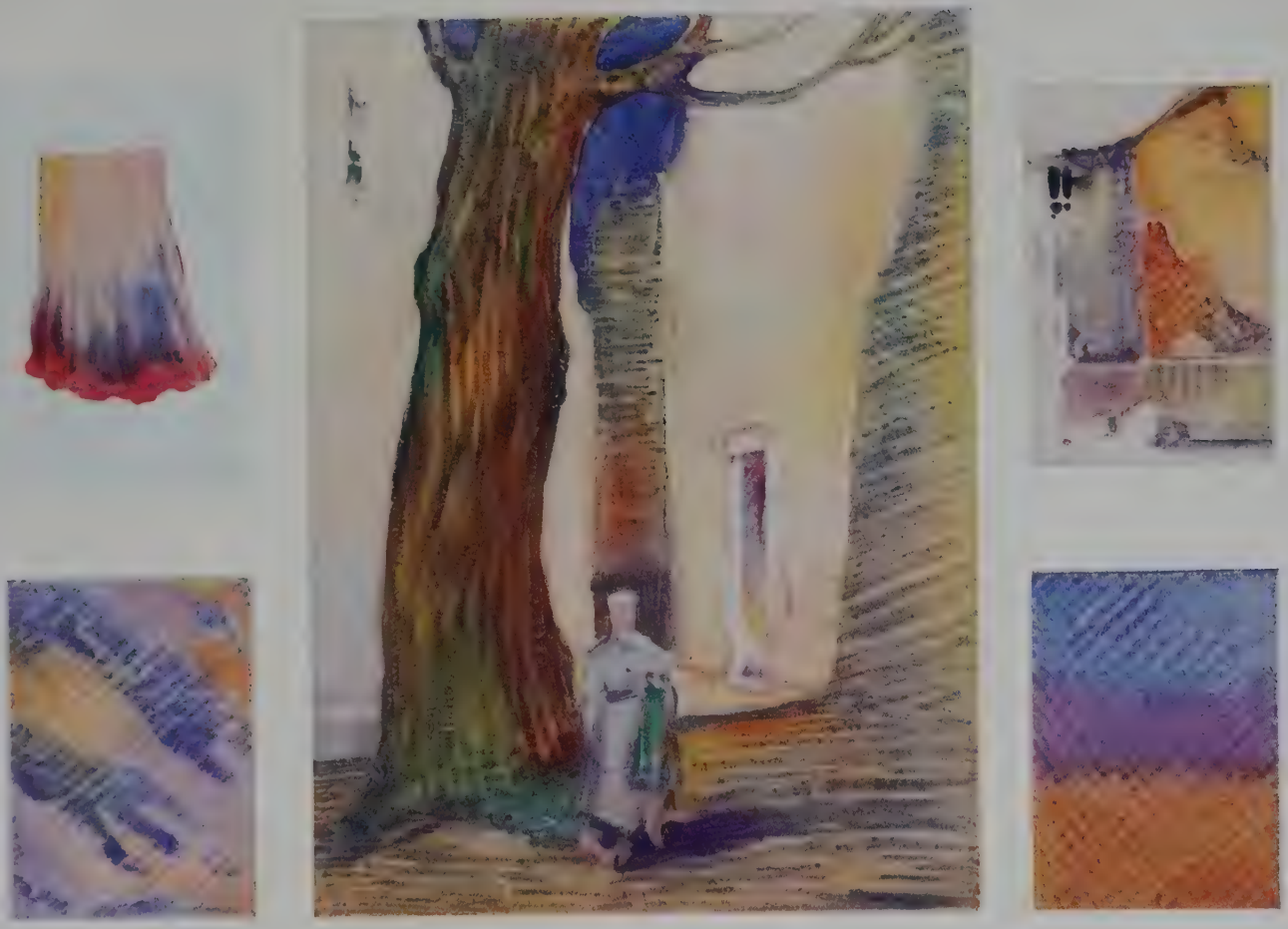

PLATE XVIII.
Scraping Out Process.

CHAPTER XII

SCRAPING-OUT PROCESS

ALL the examples illustrated on Plate XVIII were done on fairly thick cartridge drawing paper. Each illustration is based on the same method of using an ordinary penknife, and holding the blade at about an angle of 30° to the cartridge paper, scraping with firm pressure parallel lines or curves at any convenient angle. The paper should be so placed, as regards the light, that the student will be able to see clearly the direction of the scraped lines. If the face of the student is held very close to the drawing paper he will obtain a good view of what is actually happening when using the penknife. It is better to move the knife fairly quickly for each stroke of the blade, so as to obtain a definite line of equal degree of incision. If the knife is used too slowly the grain of the paper diverts it from the intended direction. Next, use some liquid colour, such as yellow ochre (mixed with plenty of water) and, with a fair sized brush, paint a flat wash over the whole of the scraped lines. At once there are two tints of yellow ochre. The scraped portions of the paper cause a great deal of its surface to be slightly raised, and each raised portion (through the effect of light) casts its own miniature shadow. It is these innumerable little shadows that give the illusion of a deeper tint, whereas there is only one tint, i.e. the flat wash of yellow ochre.

The coloured diagram on the bottom left side of Plate XVIII shows how various colours look when washed over parallel scraped lines. In the bottom right diagram the lines are scraped diagonally with similar colour washes.

The top left diagram suggests how flowing scraped curves can be treated with some artistry. The colour, when washed over this preparation, runs easily along the grooves caused by the penknife. In fact, it requires little skill on the part of the artist to get an interesting blend of colour as, although the blending of the colours is to a certain extent accidental, yet it is chiefly controlled by the irritated surface of the paper, which prevents colours from merging entirely into each other and from thus destroying the pure wash of the adjoining tints. Flowing curves treated in this manner suggest similar treatment for folds of drapery, curtain hangings, the bark of tree trunks, corn-fields, and the growth of grass in landscape, etc. In the illustration on the top right side of Plate XVIII the application of scraping is used to convey the impression of old cottage walls with

PLATE XIX

Colour sketches involving the use of charcoal.

PLATE XIX.
Charcoal and Water-Colour.

crumbling surfaces. In this instance fewer parallel lines were scratched on the paper, as that style of treatment would not help to demonstrate a crumbling surface. It was obtained by a more or less even distribution of little scraped marks or spots done more with the point of the knife than with the blade.

The central illustration on Plate XVIII has more pictorial value than the other four examples. All the lines in this sketch were prepared in advance with a penknife. It is surprising how simple it is to wash transparent colours over a subject of this type of picture. Notice, for instance, how effectively a tree trunk can be rendered with scraped lines. As each colour was applied two colours appeared, the darker tint in each case giving the suggestion of the bark growth, and harmoniously blending the greens and browns without loss of decision in the detailed forms.

All the lines denoted in the foreground and adjoining wall are treated in precisely the same manner as the tree trunk. There is a happy contrast between the drawing paper left unmolested with the penknife and the scraped portions of the drawing paper. The doorway on the right-hand wall was suggested by washing out, causing a soft atmospheric surface, contrasting well with the sharp aggressive lines in the scraped shadows.

Corn-fields, whether in full growth or in stubble, are amenable to this form of treatment, also corn- and hay-ricks. Then, again, there is unlimited possibilities of adapting this method of scraping out to various materials such as ordinary wearing apparel or the coarser type of costumes worn by French peasants and market women.

It is important always to bear in mind that all scraped lines, curves or dots, should structurally assist the following colour washes and in no way detract from the fundamental growth of the sketch or picture. Pure transparent colour washes painted with a very wet brush is essential if the student wishes to achieve success. Any drawing paper used should be of a fairly smooth surface. The coarse-grained paper will give little or no help towards obtaining the desired result. Moreover, even if the scraping was successful on a coarser-grained paper there is little contrast between the scraped and unscraped portions of the paper owing to its general roughness. Whereas on a smooth-surfaced paper the contrast is more noticeable between the roughened surface, caused by penknife scraping, and the smoother portions.

The few ideas here suggested scarcely touch the fringe of the possibilities, which are extremely numerous. Students would do well to try many sketches, whether figures or landscapes, in this method. A few accidental touches with the penknife, in addition to the conventionally correct scratching out when painted over, often suggest some interesting form, which helps to add to the artistry of the picture.

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PLATE XX

This plate shows the depth of charcoal required for this style of painting. Note how the charcoal suggests the appearance of crumbling stone and brick work.

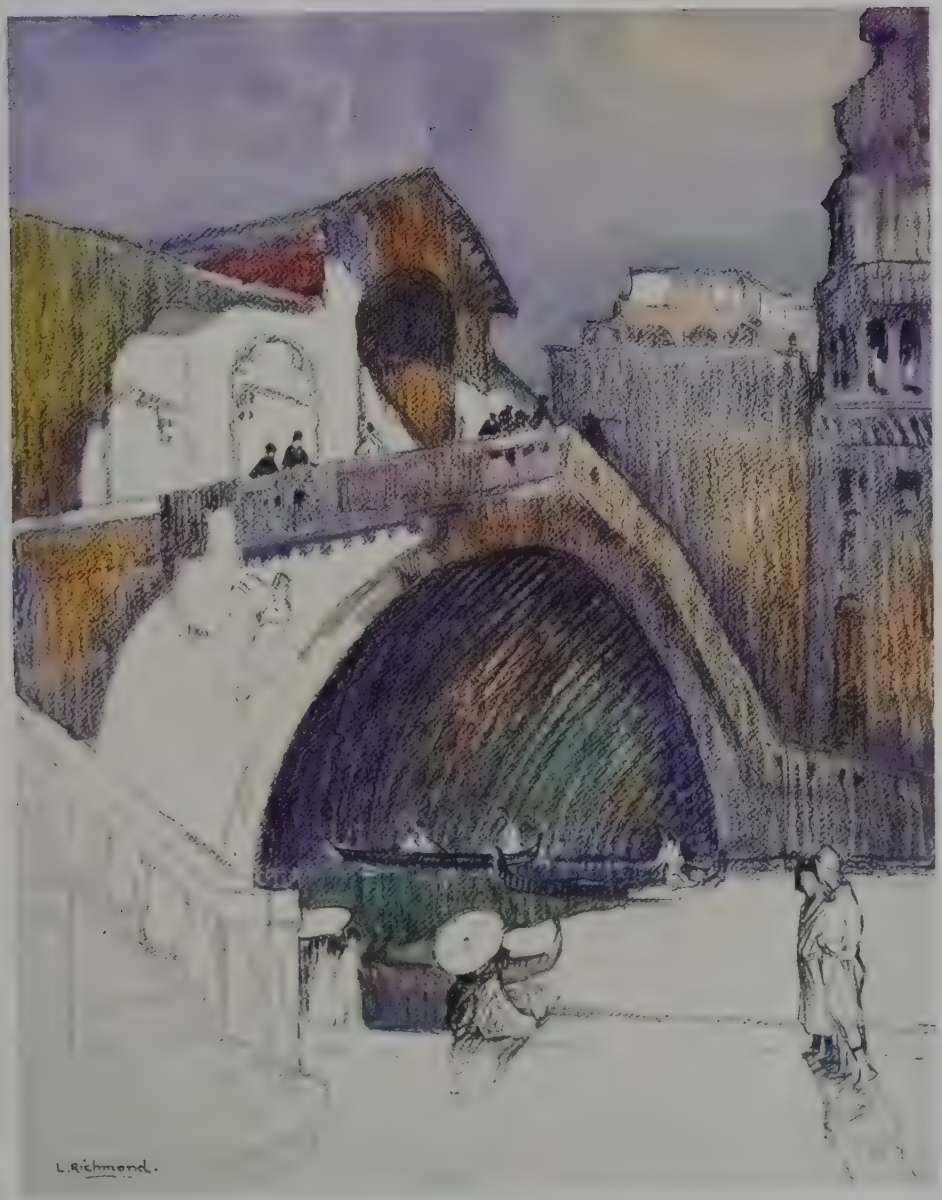

PLATE XX.

The Rialto Bridge, Venice (First Stage).

CHAPTER XIII

CHARCOAL AND WATER-COLOUR

FIXED CHARCOAL. Charcoal used in conjunction with water-colour has its own particular characteristic charm. In the demonstration, Plate XIX, relating to the use of charcoal with water-colour, there are two vertical bands of purple on the top left and top right, both being a pure wash of exactly the same tint. Note how much lighter the top left colour appears than the top right. The groundwork of the latter was prepared with a thin, soft piece of charcoal stick, applied lightly, and spread evenly on the drawing paper. It was then fixed with a liquid solution commonly known as "Fixatif" in the art trade, with a spray diffuser (also sold in art stores) in the usual manner that artists adopt for this purpose. It is at once apparent that by fixing charcoal in advance, any colour that may be applied later is unable to disturb the line drawing, granulated surface, or shadow pattern beneath. By fixing the charcoal before applying any colour, the student is in a much better position for controlling the final touches of a picture.

The use of charcoal for cloud studies is an important help to a water-colour artist. Charcoal glides easily and quickly over almost every sort of drawing paper. Thus the elusive movements and continually changing shapes of clouds can be drawn with decisive rapidity by the painter without his being too much concerned with any colour tints that he eventually uses. In the two bottom paintings the necessary depth of charcoal was obtained and then fixed before painting. The deep rich tone of the highest cloud and adjoining sky in the bottom left sketch was easily arrived at with a fairly light-coloured wash over the dark-toned charcoal drawing. The same remark is applicable to the trees and castle in the middle distance.

For architectural subjects charcoal is often a help, not only for accuracy in displaying architectural knowledge, but also for suggesting by reason of its crumbling surface, an atmosphere of antiquity.

In the water-colour of "The Rialto Bridge, Venice," shown in two stages, the first stage (Plate XX) shows clearly the depth of charcoal required. The granulated charcoal effect on the houses on the other side of the water and the top portion of the bridge not only produces in the shadows a rich depth of tone before painting, but also helps to suggest the appearance of ancient, crumbling stone and brick work.

PLATE XXI

In this final stage of the subject a strong contrast is evident between the almost pure washes, as shown in the left of the bridge, and the tints washed over more strongly-prepared charcoal ground.

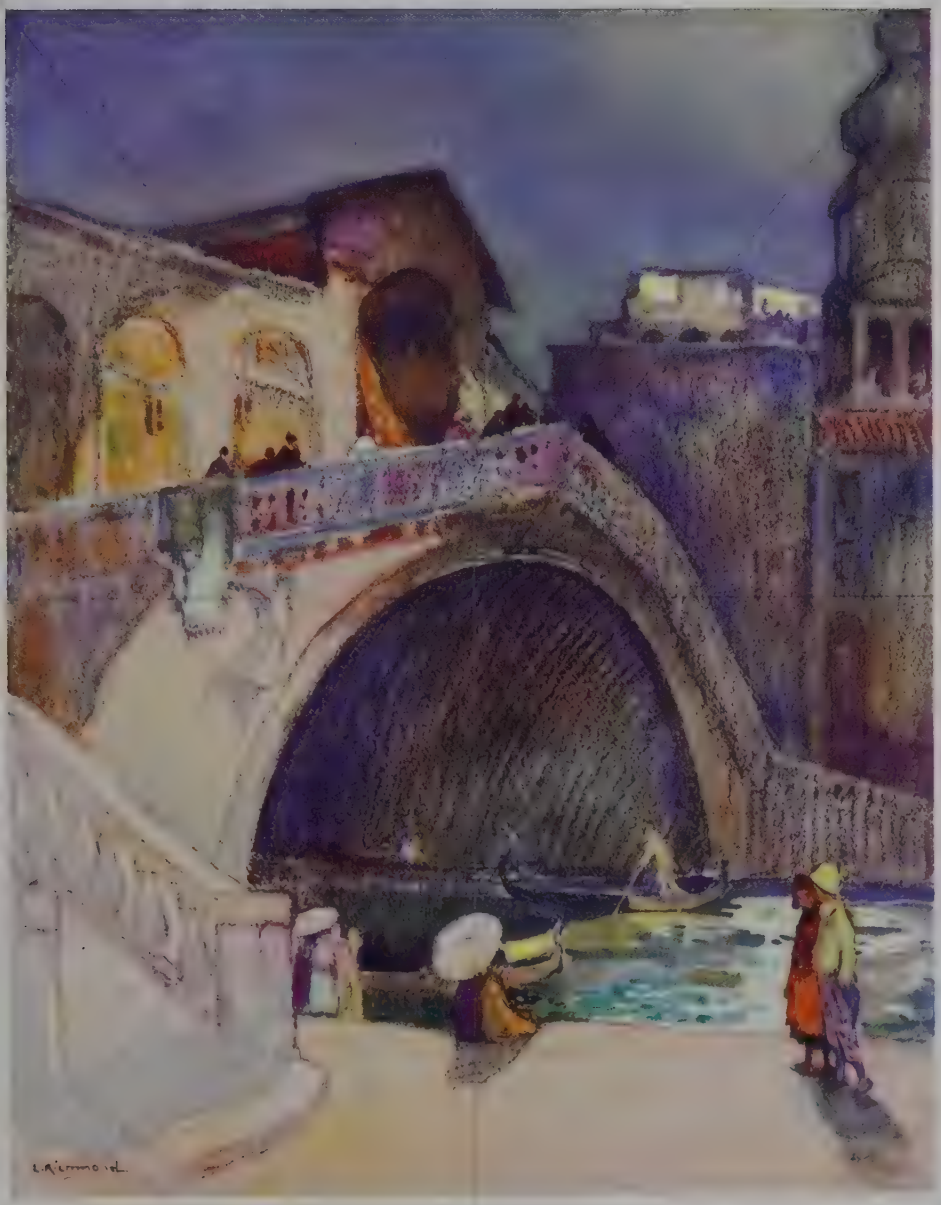

PLATE XXI.
The Rialto Bridge, Venice (Final Stage).

In the finished stage (Plate XXI) the sky was deepened in colour, all the buildings in shadow were completely painted over again, whilst the high lights had delicate touches of bright tints so as to give more detail and tone on the lighter portions of the drawing paper.

It is important to remember when painting in water-colour on a prepared charcoal drawing that the colour should be much brighter and purer in tint than is usually the case when washed over a pencil drawing. The depth of tone, or density of charcoal, tends to neutralize any bright colour washed over its surface.

An undeniable advantage of a generous use of charcoal with water-colour is the manner and degree in which it helps to strengthen the whole picture, and to link together the component parts, either of buildings, figures or landscapes, by its recurring undertone of dark charcoal tint. In the water-colour of "The Rialto Bridge, Venice" (Plate XXI) charcoal was used very sparingly in the high lights of the picture, as seen on the left side of the bridge and in the figures and balustrades in the foreground. Under these conditions the bright purity of the colour washes contrast with marked effect when opposed to the tints washed over the more strongly prepared charcoal ground.

Unfixed Charcoal. This method requires more knowledge of the ultimate result of a painting, the charcoal being used without having been previously fixed with liquid solution. Provided that the charcoal drawing is sound in construction and not too solidly used, and that dense patches of black surfaces are avoided, colour can be washed over without obliterating the original charcoal drawing. A large square-shaped brush, not less than half an inch wide, should be used when convenient, in preference to a small paint brush, which only tends to disturb beyond repair the charcoal beneath. For some purposes the unfixed charcoal method is more appropriate than the other, as for instance, in a landscape depicting early morning frost, the contours of trees, and other effects of nature can be shown better by the unfixed charcoal. It causes a sharply broken surface, giving a realistic impression of the sparkling, vibrant sensation generally associated with hoar frost.

In the miniature top middle sketch on Plate XIX the use of charcoal is seen to advantage for suggesting a lyrical style of landscape that does not pay too much attention to obvious detailed forms.

In a study of this sort the unfixed charcoal immediately coming into contact with the water-colour becomes absorbed more or less into the water-colour tint, and thus any likelihood of hard edges showing in the various forms depicted in the painting is minimized. It is natural to suppose that under these conditions unexpected results will occasionally happen. Sometimes they are for the good of a picture. If not, it is advisable to make

PLATE XXII

This is the first stage of a painting in body colour, in which plenty of water was used in order to lay out rapidly the plan of the subject.

PLATE XXII.
A Pas-de-Calais Scene (First Stage).

a fresh attempt, as the charm of charcoal used in conjunction with colour disappears as soon as too much paint is used ; besides which the original form of the charcoal drawing becomes lost with overpainting.

Unfixed charcoal is useful in studies of quick running water, where the general direction and movement on the surface retains, to a certain extent, the intentions of the artist in the original drawing, although painted over with a fluent wash of colour.

It is sometimes advisable to fix only part of a charcoal picture, leaving the remainder unfixed. By so doing a contrasting element is formed which adds to the artistic interest of the picture. The foreground of a landscape (especially of a bold type) can be rendered in a forcible manner if the charcoal is fixed so that any water-colour painted on it does not soften the contours of the charcoal drawing. Before the fixatif is applied to the charcoal a piece of ordinary cartridge paper can be laid over the middle distance and top portions of the landscape and pinned into position, so that the spraying of the fixatif is unable to touch the protected surface of the charcoal drawing. Should the exact shape of the foreground be required for fixing, the lower part of the covering cartridge paper can be cut with a pair of scissors so as to fit precisely the silhouette mass of the upper portion of the foreground. The safer plan, before cutting with the scissors, is to trace on to a sheet of transparent tracing paper with a soft blacklead pencil the main outline form of the foreground and re-trace back on to the covering cartridge paper, thus giving the opportunity of cutting the exact pattern of the foreground.

It is usually safer to fix charcoal drawings when lying in horizontal positions. If the drawing is placed vertically on an easel or elsewhere, the tendency (unless unusual care is shown) is for the liquid fixatif to smudge and lose the outlines of the charcoal drawing by running vertically downwards. If this effect is desired by the student, the result is just as easily obtained through the use of water-colour on an unfixed charcoal surface, and saving the unnecessary expense and time accruing from the use of fixatif.

The above remarks concerning the fixing of landscape pictures are equally applicable to figure composition subjects where certain portions of a picture need the restraining influence of fixed charcoal, as opposed to the looser and softer effect of unfixed charcoal.

The use of charcoal with water-colour painting is not easy and requires constant practice. A muddy result is painful to behold. Indecision of handling leads to tragic results. Students who have had little experience in charcoal painting are advised to do many exercises with a sparing use of charcoal until confidence is gained by success in light charcoal groundwork, after which it is a fairly easy road to the stronger stages of charcoal handling.

PLATE XXIII

In this final stage the sky body colour was first applied, and over it, while still wet, was painted the further distance showing hills and trees.

PLATE XXIII.
A Pas-de-Calais Scene (Final Stage).

CHAPTER XIV

BODY COLOUR

BODY colour, in other words, transparent colour mixed with chinese white or tempera white, is capable of expressing a very wide range between strength and delicacy, light and shadow, bright colours and dull colours. It is seen at its best when painted on tinted paper. Students are advised not to try body colour on dark-coloured paper until some mastery has been achieved on a lighter surface. To manipulate this medium with any success on dark paper, a very large mixture of white must be used in the high lights of the painting. This, however, will bring about disaster unless the painting is done with a quick decisive touch, with solid colour, of which the paint brush must be fully charged, so that the paint (despite its thick consistency) is almost falling off the brush before being applied to the paper. Even then, as a rule, the colour, after drying, is considerably darker than when freshly painted, more particularly if the paper is of an absorbent nature.

Plate XXII shows the first stage of a painting in body colour. In this stage plenty of water was used so as to cover the ground quickly and more or less lay out the plan or composition of the subject. The colour of the paper is noticeable in the top cloudlet.

In the final painting (Plate XXIII) the sky was dealt with first, being painted with solid body colour. The further distance (hills and trees) was painted on top of the sky whilst wet. Owing to the thickness of the pigment used, the contours of the hills and trees silhouetted against the sky were kept sharp and clearly defined. This result is not so easy to achieve when the painting is done on a thin wet coat of body colour.

The various tones from the distant hills down to the nearer foreground, were deepened, and detail was added in the trees, etc.

It is merely a matter of additional time in suggesting more detailed forms in a landscape of this type of scenery, but the painter preferred to insist more on the decorative pattern of a decorative subject.

Plate XXIV, " Cottages of Beure, near Besançon, France," is an ideal subject for body colour treatment. The sky, being dark, was painted in first, although little colour was needed as the paper is of a dark grey tint. The dark contours of the top portion of the buildings were done next, with their adjoining shadows. There being a certain amount of warmth in the shadows, a yellow and burnt-sienna tint was used in addition to

9 -(9-91)

PLATE XXIV

The order of treatment in this subject was, first, the dark sky ; next, the dark contours of the top portion of the buildings, with their adjoining shadows ; then, the vertical parts supporting beams, etc. ; and, lastly, the sunlit and other bright portions. A full description will be found on pages 55 and 57.

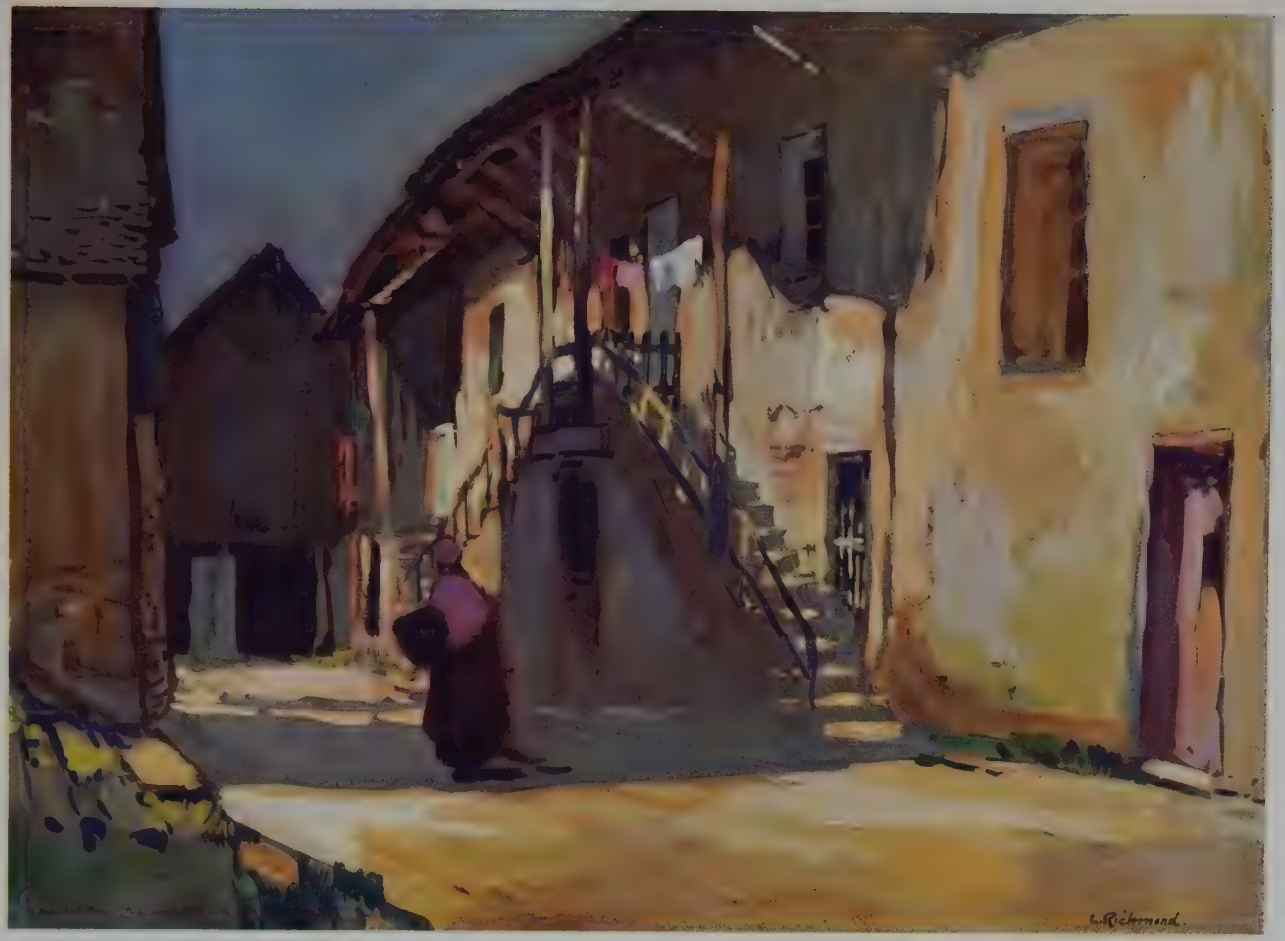

PLATE XXIV.
Cottages of Beure, near Besançon, France.

grey. There were also some suggestions of purple violet. All these shadow colours should be mixed as near as possible to the desired tints *before* painting, because unless shadows of this type are painted in a direct manner, it is generally fatal to try to alter the result. The vertical parts supporting beams, windows, etc., were painted on top of the deep shadows whilst still damp.

The portions of the picture that are seen in sunlight were painted with somewhat thin yellow ochre, light greys, etc., and whilst these latter tints were still wet very solid touches of nearly white body colour were used to give brilliance to the painting. This is the most interesting stage of all. The reason for using nearly pure white in the last painting is that the wet colours underneath affect the whitest tint thus applied, so that when dry it is not quite so light as the original tint used.

Dark brown paper was used for the painting as seen in Plate XXV, "A Glimpse of Besançon Cathedral, France." For all the lights and red-roofed buildings in this sketch, very thickly-mixed body colour was the only thing that availed the artist on so dark a paper. In the initial stage of the painting the trees were not touched with colour, being quite flat and poster-like in appearance as soon as the sky and lights behind the trees were painted in between. Later it was a comparatively simple matter, with the help of thin body colour, to suggest warm and cold greens in the foliage. The touches of light on the trunks were done towards the end of the sitting.

The light in the immediate foreground contributes towards the effect of an even distribution of high lights.

The painting (XXVI), "The Lace Market, Besançon, France," done out of doors, was very difficult to manage. The paper used was appropriate for the subject, i.e. a greenish grey, the original colour of which can be seen in the larger window immediately above the awning of the lace stall. In the treatment of the buildings behind the lace stalls, care was taken by the artist in drawing the upright contours of the walls, windows, etc., not to adhere too rigidly to straight lines, so that the necessary feeling of antiquity should be conveyed. The thickest body colour was used on the top of the various tents or awnings centrally spanned right across the picture. Before any detail was attempted in the vertical bands of hanging lace and materials below, the various silver grey tones were painted with very little body colour and plenty of water. When dry, a small paint brush was used for showing the detail portions of the lace, etc.

A subject of this description demands thought before painting. It is not a difficult matter to lay in a false tone which would destroy the harmony of the whole picture.

PLATE XXV

An example of painting on dark brown paper. Very thick body colour was used for the lights and bright colours of roofs. All finishing touches were applied with light body colours. Details of the procedure are given on page 57.

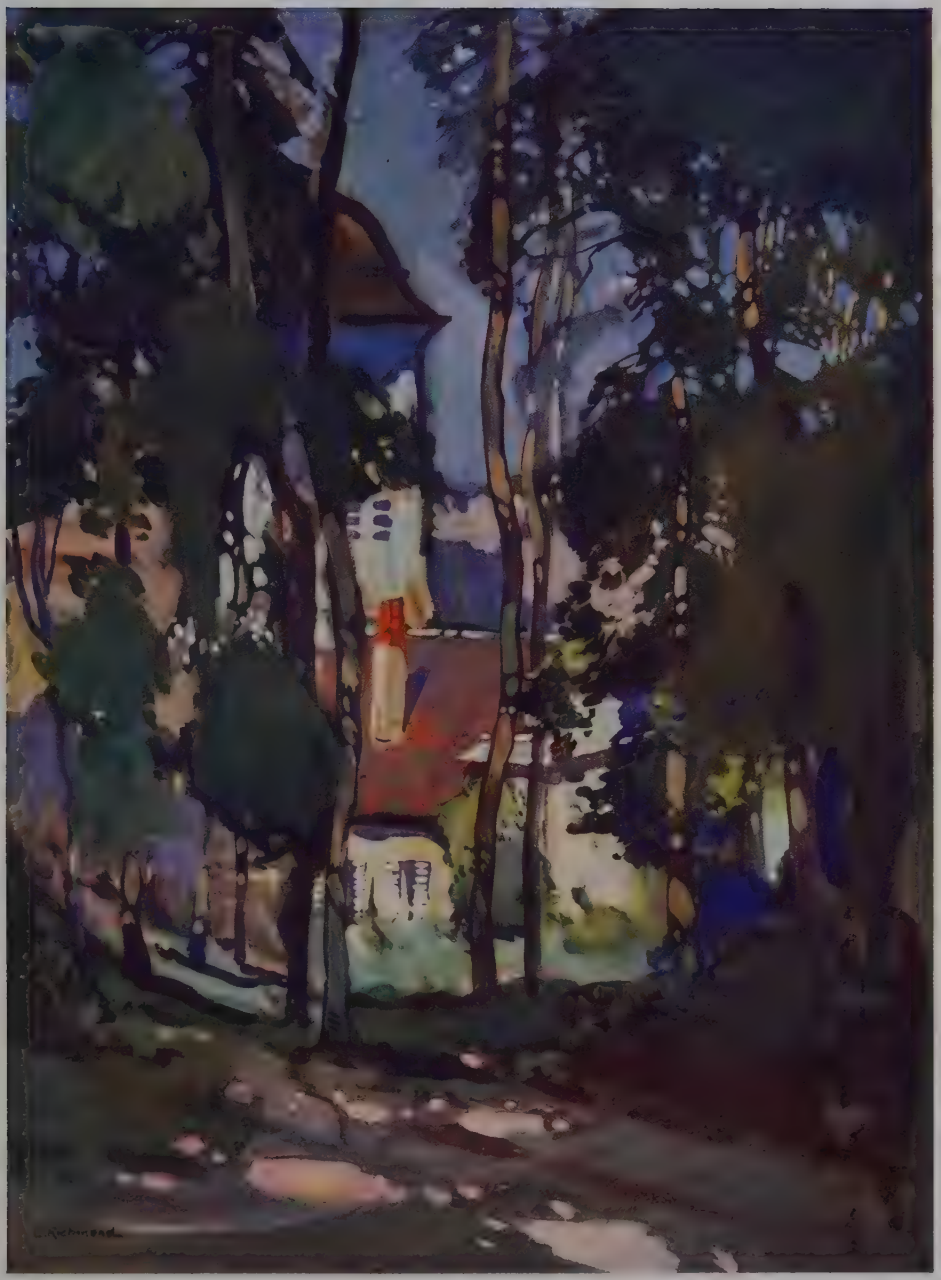

PLATE XXV.
A Glimpse of Besançon Cathedral, France.

CHAPTER XV

VARIOUS DEVICES

THERE are several ways of using body colour. The most common method in use is to mix solid white paint with ordinary water-colour wash. To do this with a certain standard of correctness, it is as well to obtain the necessary strength or delicacy that may be required in colour and tone by mixing the required tints before beginning the actual painting. A small palette knife is invaluable for this purpose. To mix colours and tempera white with a brush not only takes up a good deal of time, but soon wears out the brush itself. Moreover, the grinding power of a palette knife reduces the various colours to an even consistency which can easily be applied with a brush on the tinted paper.

It is an excellent exercise for the student to mix a tint of bright body colour of light tone and, with very little added water, to paint solidly a small patch of this colour on a fairly deep coloured paper (olive tint, for preference).

Then use the same colour again with more water, and paint another small patch near the first painting, and continue in the same way by adding more water at each attempt until at least six have been done, the last, of course, being generously diluted with water.

It soon becomes apparent that the greater the quantity of water used with the body colour on tinted paper the darker the colour becomes when applied to the paper. By painting six or more washes of the same colour in this manner, the student should have no difficulty in demonstrating the tints of the same colour, varying in gradated stages from the lightest tint to the darkest.

If this practice were carried out for a few minutes every day for a month, the student should then be able to comprehend all that is necessary for the manipulation of different tones in body colour on tinted papers.

On Plate XXVII are several examples of interesting experiments, all painted on white tinted cartridge drawing paper. The top left demonstration gives the brilliancy of colour that results from using a flat wash of liquid transparent lemon yellow on the top of a flat coat of tempera white. The white paint was allowed to dry completely before the lemon yellow wash was laid on. A square sable brush, about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. wide, was used for all these body colour experiments so as to allow the

PLATE XXVI

A picture painted entirely out of doors. A description of the methods employed is given on page 57.

PLATE XXVI.
The Lace Market, Besançon, France.

ordinary colour washes to be quickly and lightly painted, and leave the colour underneath undisturbed.

The middle left diagram is just a pure wash of burnt-sienna, and the middle right diagram illustrates the result of a thin coat of tempera white painted rapidly over the burnt-sienna tint. Notice how the warm tone of the burnt-sienna changes under the influence of a little white, diluted with plenty of water.

At this stage students are advised to try to work out, on similar lines to the examples shown on Plate XXVII, as many schemes of washing, one colour on another colour, as may be possible, but always with a wide chisel-shaped brush, so that a large area can be covered with each stroke. A charming effect can be obtained by laying on a liquid wash of light violet tint, over a groundwork of lemon yellow body colour, as demonstrated in the top right diagram (Plate XXVII) ; or a well-diluted wash of viridian over cadmium body colour. There are, of course, hundreds of other colour effects along these lines, beginning with the use of quiet, restrained colours, and leading up to brilliant colour schemes. It must be quite obvious to the student of water-colour painting that the possible experiments on the use of alternate washes of body and water-colour open up a big field for individual ideas and tastes. The bottom coloured diagram on Plate XXVII represents a fascinating exercise in washing various pure colours on a prepared ground of white body colour. The groundwork is quite easily rendered by placing on the paper, at fairly regular intervals, large spots of white paint (well ground with a palette knife and mixed with water before painting). When the white paint is nearly dry begin painting with pure wash colours mixed with perfectly clean water. As soon as one colour tint is finished, apply with another brush the next colour, just touching the first colour, but do not try to blend these two colours, as the white below will do this without any assistance from the painter. By preparing all the colour washes before laying them on, and seeing that each colour has its own particular brush ready for immediate action, the student should find no difficulty in bringing about an interesting result. If some of the spots appear to be too prominent during the wash painting, they can be toned down by working the wet brush over them several times until the circular edges become more or less dissolved in the surrounding colours. Some suggestions of white groundwork are here made for further developments *apropos* this exercise—

1. Parallel lines or curves.
2. Interlacing curves.
3. Squares interspersed with small spots.
4. Outlines of human figures showing folds of garments, such as the skirt, blouse, etc.

PLATE XXVII

Illustrating experiments in manipulating different tones in body colour on cartridge drawing paper. See pages 59 and 61.

PLATE XXVII.
Various Devices (First Group).

VARIOUS DEVICES

There are, naturally, many other ways of expressing form in white body colour. It is easier in this particular instance to work on white, or nearly white, drawing paper, as the colour washed over the prepared groundwork is more able to retain its pure brilliancy.

In Plate XXVIII two vertical shapes on the top left and right, respectively, show as nearly as possible the same depth of colour, the top right diagram being an example of a pure water-colour wash while the top left diagram is of approximately the same colour, painted in body colour. This illustrates clearly this important, although simple, fact that any tint of body colour painted with solid consistency results in an opaque surface, whereas nearly every water-colour, if washed in with a generous amount of water, creates the illusion of transparency. White, mixed with a transparent water-colour, not only causes the transparent colour to become thicker in its consistency, but also through its opaqueness tends to shut out the colour of the tinted paper on which it is used.

On Plate XXVIII are two demonstration sketches, the first being the top middle and the second the bottom sketch. In the top middle sketch a flat ground wash of body colour, which was carefully mixed and prepared before painting, was laid with a large brush on the white paper. Whilst this colour was quite wet, a good-sized damp sponge was used rapidly for sponging out the lighter portions of the sketch. No time was lost between the flat painting and the sponging out. The sponge should be cleansed in pure water after each patch of body colour is wiped off the surface, unless there is any special reason for not doing so, such as an attempt to secure a half-tone tint ranging between the highest light of the drawing paper and the depth of the body colour, but at first it is as well not to try this. If the colour is allowed to dry before the sponge is used, it becomes exceedingly difficult to control the medium, and the contours of buildings, etc., assume a harder and sometimes a lacerated edging, instead of the softer artistic surface as appears in the illustration.

There are several subjects in landscape painting for which this method of sponging out body colour is peculiarly suitable. For example, the difficulty of rendering swift, moving clouds in water-colour has long been a great obstacle, even to advanced professional artists. With a little damp sponge (eye sponges are the best, and most chemists sell them), all manner of suave, light-tinted shapes can be made on the surface of wet body colour, when painted over white or cream tinted drawing paper. The cloud illustration, in the bottom sketch of Plate XXVIII, shows a dramatic rendering of heavy rain clouds. All the sky and landscape were painted with one coat of body colour, as demonstrated in the top middle sketch, and the same method was used for sponging out so as to obtain the various shapes of clouds. The landscape below was painted over the first coat

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PLATE XXVIII

Experiments with wash and body colour, and demonstration sketches. See pages 63 and 65.

PLATE XXVIII.
Various Devices (Second Group).

of colour, and the sponge was used sparingly over this portion of the picture. There is no reason why more than one colour in the same body-colour cloud sketch should not be used, but it is advisable to practise continually with one colour only so as to obtain a complete mastery over the intricacies of a simple sponge. (*See* Chapter XIV for further remarks on body colour.) On Plate XXIX, the picture entitled "The River," the subject, in its initial state, was drawn carefully in lead pencil, with a fairly black line. Then a warm grey was mixed, to which was added a large quantity of water. The paper (cartridge) having been placed in an upright position on an easel, a large brush was dipped into clean water and then applied to the thinly-mixed body colour. The body colour was painted horizontally across the paper rather rapidly, until the whole picture ground was covered, including, of course, the pencil drawing. The semi-thickness of the tint used made a vertically-inclined streak to appear in the painting (caused by the upright position of the cartridge paper), which has a certain agreeable quality of textural value. The paint was not thick enough to disguise the drawing beneath. A certain mannerism was adopted in suggesting the general shapes of trees, figures, and boat, etc., before the solid colour masses were painted in, by strengthening their outlines, or contours, with a small sable paint brush. In the contours of the tree foliage a lesser and more open touch was found desirable, so as to obtain a feeling of flexibility as well as of movement. Care was taken to paint the large colour washes (which were done in liquid wash without any admixture of white) before the painted outlines had the opportunity of drying, and so hardness of outline was avoided.

The light on the water was obtained by sponging out before the body colour surface was dry. Notice how the paint representing the general masses of the trees has lost almost entirely the vertical streaks as seen in the sky. This was the result of using transparent wash over the body colour. It is important for the student to note that in attempting an exercise of this sort he must work the brushes rapidly and with decision. For lightly-suggested subjects, such as might be used for painting on fans, or for landscape effects of a misty day, this style of painting can be cordially recommended.

It must be obvious by now to students of water-colour painting that there are many ways of approaching different subjects in this interesting art. The subject should create its own style of technique. Lucky is the artist who has more than one string to his or her bow. Intelligence in the matter of different techniques in water-colour painting is no drawback to the artistic mind. Turner showed considerable resource in this respect. To paint in one method only is apt to breed dullness after several years of water-colour painting.

PLATE XXIX

An example of landscape painting in which use has been made of washing transparent colours over a thin coat of body colour, and of sponging-out. See page 65.

PLATE XXIX.
"The River."

CHAPTER XVI

BODY COLOUR AND SOAKED PAPER

TAKE small sheets of various papers, immerse them in a bath of water and leave them overnight. Next morning they will be in relative conditions of absorption, according to the amount of size in their composition—the less size the more sponginess.

Apply the same tests to each paper. Take it out of the bath and lay it on a piece of glass so that it will retain its moisture. Place it in a horizontal position and drop colours on to it, controlling their movements as far as possible with a brush. Note that the colour spreads violently, but can be wiped off far more easily than from the same kind of paper when dry or merely damped. Take another piece of the paper, remove the surface moisture with blotting paper, and repeat the experiment. This time the colour is more easily controlled, but can still be wiped off without difficulty. As the paper dries, the possibilities of control increase, except that of wiping out, which decreases. Imagine, then, what could be done if the picture were started when it was taken out of the bath and finished when the surface had become dry. Any variety of gradation, and any variety of edge, from the softest to the sharpest, could be painted when the paper was in just the right state of moisture.

Obviously, such a method would test the skill of a highly-experienced craftsman, but it would give unusual scope to the imaginative artist.

A peculiarly attractive and somewhat easier variation of this method is illustrated on Plate XXX. In this case the paper chosen was of highly absorbent quality, which became sufficiently saturated in an hour.

After placing the paper on a sheet of glass, cover the whole surface with a coat of Chinese white. Into this wet ground paint very lightly. Aim first at an undertone for each part of the picture, disregarding all details (including the figures)—both light and dark—blue and grey for the sea, and varied greys for the rocks. Paint with transparent colours, brighter and darker than required, to allow for modification by the ground of white. As the picture dries wipe the colour from the foam and the figures, and define the shapes. If the paper does not dry quickly enough, take it up and lay it on a piece of dry blotting paper ; if it dries too quickly lay it on a few sheets of soaked blotting paper. When the paper is in the right state deal with the details, add white for the lighter parts. The sharp edges should be rendered last of all when the paper is

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PLATE XXX

A picture painted in body colour on soaked paper. The method is described on pages 67 and 69.

PLATE XXX.
The Watchers on the Cliff.

almost, but not quite, dry. Given a highly absorbent paper the picture need not be finished at a sitting. For if laid on soaked blotting paper all the colour will become moist again, and can be manipulated without difficulty.

Although this is not a method for a beginner, or for anyone who has to rely on a preliminary outline, it is not quite so difficult as may at first appear, if the picture is rather small and the subject chosen is a simple one ; because, in the early stages the shape can be altered quite easily by taking off any part of the colour with a clean brush. But as it is hardly possible to tell, without a good deal of experience, exactly how much lighter each part will dry, the method is best suited to subjects characterized by brilliant colour and powerful contrasts rather than by subtle tone relations. Windy subjects, dashing water, fluttering trees, flickering lights, moving clouds and shadows, can be rendered with comparative ease. Flat tones, even gradations, exact form and delicate distinctions had better be attempted in more suitable methods.

Here, as in the case of granulation, is an ideal method for the promotion of accidental discovery. Drop masses of colour into a base of chinese white in the most irresponsible way, and, more likely than not, an idea will emerge. If it does not, wipe the colour off and try again. When stimulating impressions do happen, which can be carried no further for lack of the necessary facts, preserve the experiments and collect details for future pictures based upon these impressions.

Interesting variations might be made by mixing some colour with the preliminary coat of chinese white, and so securing a prevailing tint or tone from the beginning.

An adaptation to portraiture and decorative figure subjects can be made extraordinarily striking in the hands of a brilliant technician. Use a thick hand-made paper and draw the figure with a firm line. Paint the background first, and when the paint covers parts of the figure, as it is bound to do, wipe it off. In the later stages, when the paint is more easily controlled, it will be possible to remove all the colour from the figure, which can be painted later on when the background is dry.

PLATE XXXI

A lucky accident with a moral. This picture would have been destroyed as a failure but for a series of experiments with unexpected results. The circumstances are recorded on page 71.

PLATE XXXI.
The White Cloud.

CHAPTER XVII

LUCKY ACCIDENTS

WHEN the inevitable failure occurs, with attendant disgust and weariness, it is a common practice to destroy it at once, as an expression of feeling and an aid to forgetfulness. An absurd proceeding, for in this way a potential success may be lost. Far wiser to put it away, swallow disappointment, and determine to try experiments when in a suitable state of mind. Should a picture fail to emerge, valuable lessons may be learned and employed later upon more tractable material.

In this connection Plate XXXI is included in this book, solely on account of its history. The original intention was to paint a striking picture by means of powerful contrasts—dark sky, emphatic clouds, dense cold hills, and warm bright foreground.

The result was all too literally striking, enough to knock one down! And to add to the misfortune, most of the colour resisted all attempts of sponge and energy to dislodge it. Only the black hills could be induced to fade. As a last, and by no means hopeful, resort a wash of thin chinese white was laid over the whole surface with perceptible improvement except that the picture became too cold. Then a little varied warm colour was added to the white, and after six successive washes the picture arrived at its present state except for the sheep and a few touches on the foreground.

Lucky accidents do sometimes occur to the most unfortunate. A sponge or a running tap has been known to work wonders.

Recently one of the writers had made an undeniable mess of a subject composed of downland with prominent groups of trees in the middle distance. A few passes of the sponge heightened the general tone and took away the whole of the trees, leaving patches of pearly light in place of the dark masses. There were two pleasant consequences—an unexpected picture and an immediate sale!

CHAPTER XVIII

IMPEDIMENTA AND ACCESSORIES

NO painter of water-colours, however clever and resourceful, can afford to neglect the problems relating to impedimenta and accessories. What is the most suitable easel, paintbox, straining apparatus ? These and several other questions call for settlement.

In some cases the answer depends upon special individual requirements. For example, the best kind of easel, if any, may depend upon the method of painting adopted. One of the present writers regards any sort of easel as an intolerable nuisance, and has not discovered anything better than a table, because he generally paints in a very wet method which necessitates the keeping of the picture in a horizontal, or nearly horizontal, position.

The method of painting ought to determine the choice of any easel. For the drier methods the ordinary kinds, holding the picture almost upright, will do. For the wetter methods, an arrangement by which the picture can be held in a nearly horizontal position is essential. The drawing table, used by most black-and-white artists, or perhaps better, an architect's drawing table, is eminently practical. For comparatively small work, and for sketching, there is an easel composed of a tripod surmounted by a movable holder enabling the angle of the picture to be changed at any moment. A visit to a few shops supplying artists' and architects' drawing requisites, or if that is impossible, the perusal of their illustrated catalogues, should settle the question.

In other cases, unfortunately, the choice depends upon the depth of the pocket. Those who have no need to spare a little expense would do well to secure certain conveniences and appliances which always make for efficiency. Perhaps the most important is a really satisfactory place for storing paper. The best arrangement we know is a chest of shallow drawers with hinged fronts, used by architects, and called a drawing-office cabinet. It should be large and with sufficient drawers to take everything of the kind required, and to allow for division into cartridge, tinted, hot pressed, not pressed, mounted paper, picture mounts, sketches, finished pictures and what-not.

Mounts of various shapes, sizes, and patterns, with frames to match, should be regarded as necessities, because it often happens that a picture which turns out to be unsatisfactory on the scale originally intended, is transformed when cut down to another size and shape. And it is very helpful to look at the picture behind the mount at various stages of the

work. Many a picture has been ruined by over elaboration in consequence of the neglect of this obviously reasonable precaution.

There is no excuse for the absence of a large T square and set-square. Pictures in which houses, towers, and walls threaten to topple, and reflections take impossible directions are true signs of the amateur, in the invidious sense of the word.

The best kind of paintbox is a never ending topic for discussion. Here again the method of painting is bound to influence the choice. If one paints in large washes at a table there is little need for a box of any kind. A nest of white saucers and tubes of colour are more useful for all but the final touches.

If, however, a box is in constant use, the question of tubes v. pans becomes important. To buy filled pans is open to one grave objection—the colour is almost certain to get dirty and mixed with some of the others. A large brush charged with a dark colour accidentally thrust into a full pan of very moist pale colour may destroy the purity of the whole. Probably the most satisfactory plan is to buy empty "whole pans," squeeze in a little colour at a time, and clean them frequently.

There is much to be said for large tubes containing certainly at least four times as much as the ordinary "whole tubes." They are considerably cheaper, and small tubes encourage the suicidal tendency to be niggardly instead of lavish.

A large supply of pure water (there is no more convenient receptacle than a huge glass jam jar) is essential. It is sheer childishness to try to paint a clean picture with dirty water.

The havoc wrought by uneven paper justifies the possession of the best obtainable straining apparatus. The usual method—that of damping the paper, laying it on a drawing board and pasting the edges is rarely satisfactory except for moderately thin paper and on a small scale. Often it peels off, stretches insufficiently, and cockles when painted on, or splits because it is overstrained. There are several kinds of straining appliances more often used by architects than by artists, which can be negotiated in a few minutes with invariable success. All things considered, nothing can equal a prepared board, i.e. paper pasted on thick cardboard, but it must be pasted by hand, as the pressure of machine rollers takes all the character out of the surface of any good paper.

As with methods so with materials: personal investigation, if pursued with thoroughness and intelligence, is always more fruitful than the blind acceptance of the best advice.

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